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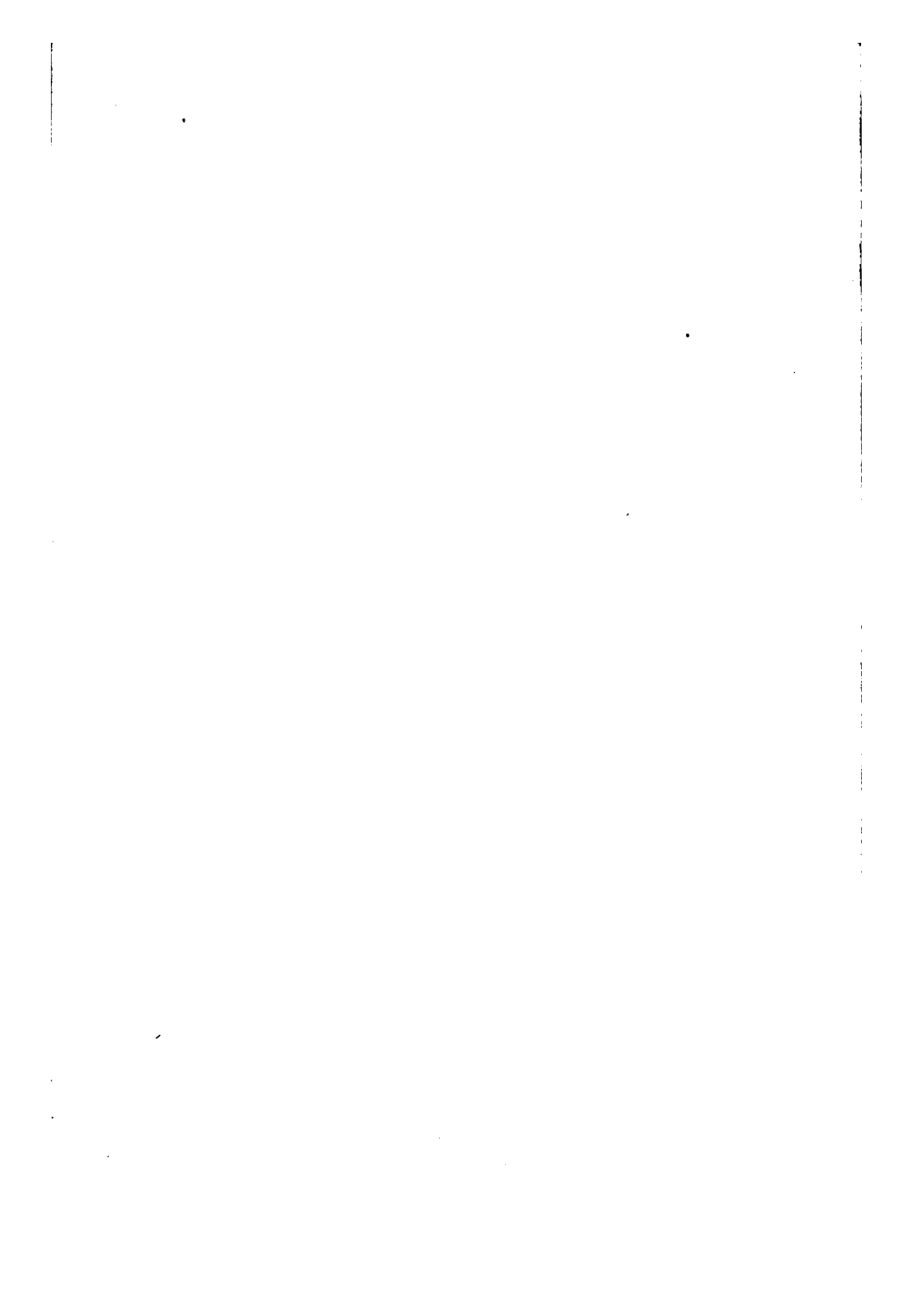
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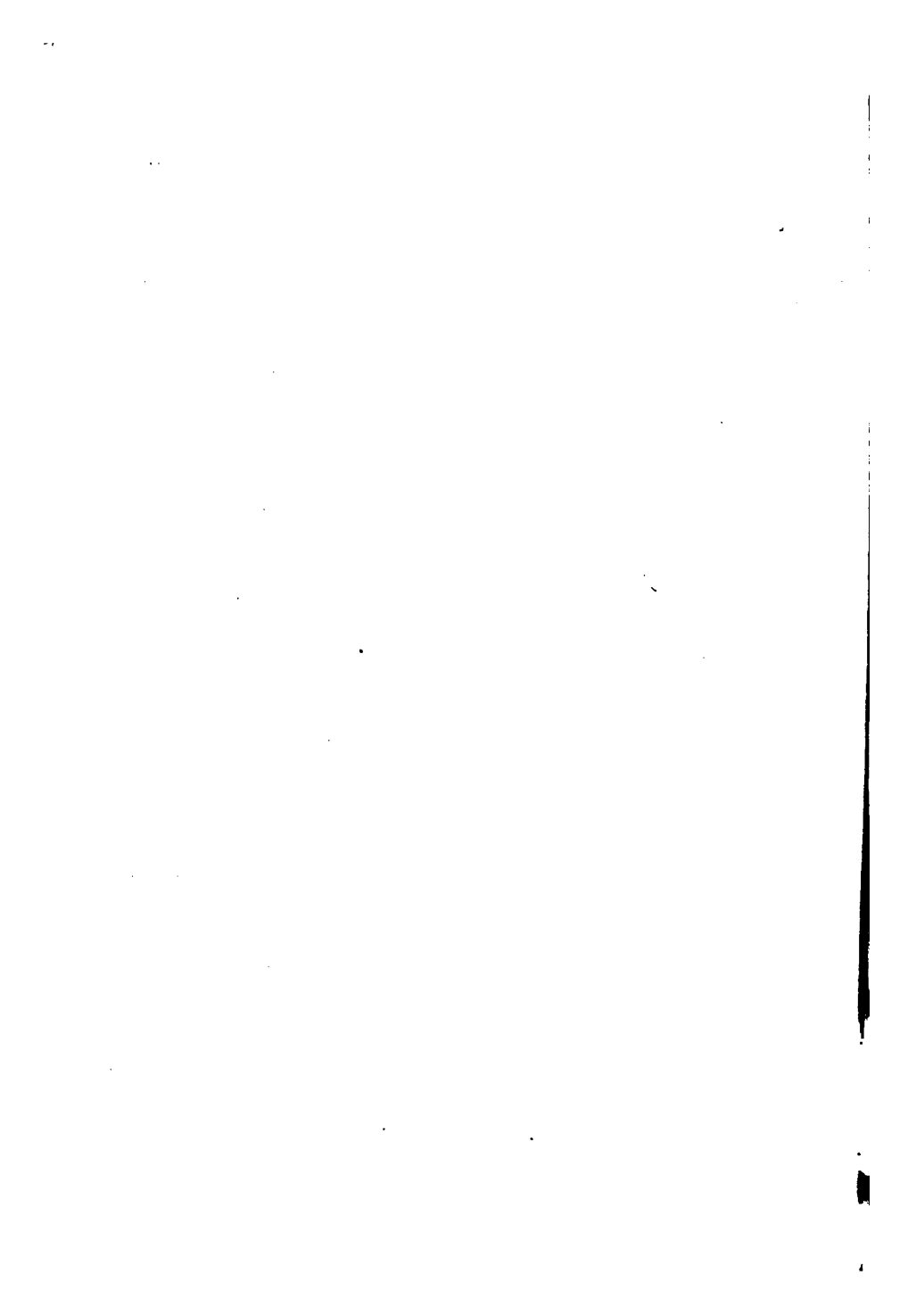
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**ORGANIZED LABOR
IN AMERICAN HISTORY**



ORGANIZED LABOR IN AMERICAN HISTORY

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BY

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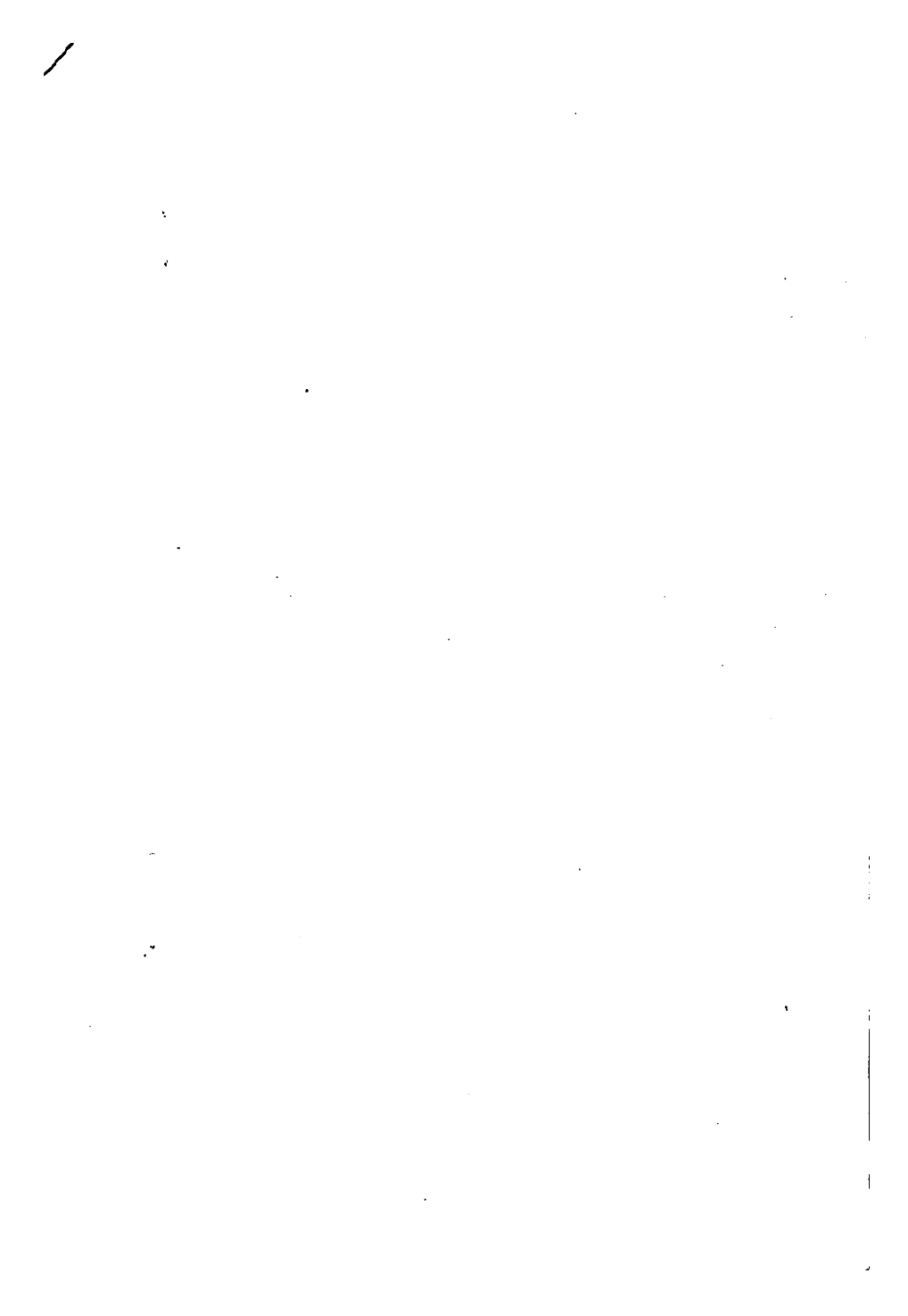
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TO
THE AMERICAN WORKINGMAN
A NATION BUILDER



PREFATORY NOTE

In the critical period of reconstruction or readjustment following the great world upheaval, one of the biggest of the many big world problems is concerned with the relations between labor and capital. It is evident that social and industrial relations are in a state of flux. Labor organizations have been throughout their history fighting groups, with the consequent weaknesses and tendencies that grow out of opposition and negation. In the United States there are certain indications of a new and constructive era in unionism and in industrial management; but, on the other hand, we may be on the threshold of a period of bitter industrial conflict. It is the purpose of this book to present the background for an intelligent consideration of the labor problems of today.

Portions of three chapters have appeared in articles published in *The Survey*, *The International Molders' Journal*, *The Popular Science Monthly* and *The Public*. The writer has received helpful suggestions and criticisms from his former teacher, Professor Richard T. Ely, and from his former colleagues, Professors P. H. Hembdt and John Zedler. Mr. Q. F. Walker, formerly one of his students, aided him in gathering material for Chapter VII.

F. T. C.

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ORGANIZED LABOR IN AMERICAN HISTORY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

History is concerned with more than the mere perfunctory cataloguing of incidents; with more than a string of events held together by the colorless thread of chronology. It is no longer to be considered solely as a record of sanguinary episodes and of individual prowess or debauchery. True history presents a fascinating picture of conflicting races, interests, sections and classes; it tells the interesting story of the struggle of the masses upward toward equality of opportunity. Historical science, therefore, is a study of cause and effect. In the realm of physics, chemistry or engineering, changes in the structure, form or content of materials take place in consequence of the application of power or of heat, or because of some other modification in the conditions affecting the materials. Likewise, in the political or the social sphere, structures or institutions such as, for example, the state,

the church, the family, labor organizations, political parties or associations of employers, are evolved and transformed in response to modifications in the physical and the social environment. Progress, socially and politically, is vitally and intimately connected with changes in the methods of doing the world's work. As the means employed by members of society in getting a living are improved, institutions, customs and social conventions undergo radical transformations.

It is quite clear that the advance of a primitive people from the hunting or the pastoral to the agricultural stage in human progress was accompanied by revolutionary changes in the home, industrial, military and social life. The ideals, customs, beliefs, training, institutions and organizations of people suffer gradual, but inevitable and important, transformations as a result of new work, new discipline and new experiences which exert silent and constant pressure upon each and every individual member of the primitive tribe or horde concerned. The progress from slavery to serfdom and from serfdom to the modern wage system was preceded by changes in the density of population and in industrial methods. Especially within the last century and a half the intimate relations between industrial evolution and social progress have been forced upon the attention of all thinkers. The American people, and nearly all others of the western hemisphere, have been transformed. Rural life, isolation, small

scale industry, nonspecialized work have been replaced by city life, interdependence and coöperation, big business and minute subdivision of labor. The individuals and nations of the globe have been brought closely in touch with each other. A world alliance is no longer a Utopian dream. The isolated worker has been replaced by the unionist, the small business firm by the giant corporation, the local by the world market, the stage coach by the Pullman, and the sickle by the harvester. These kaleidoscopic changes in industry are definitely reflected in the home, social, business and political life of the nation. In fact, political institutions, wars and royal intrigues are but the visible manifestations of underlying and powerful social, economic, geographic and racial forces.¹ History, therefore, may not inaccurately be termed the social mechanics of the past; or it may logically be called the economics of the past. History is, indeed, "the record not of the doings of man, but of his progress." The memoirs of the "not-great" are in reality the most important, but usually the neglected, part of real history.

Organized labor, like organized capital or a political party, is a social phenomenon; it is a social institution. The form, methods, ideals and purposes of labor organizations may be studied in the

¹ Carlton, "The Industrial Factor in Social Progress." *Report of Committee on the Place of Industries in Public Education*, National Education Association (1910) pp. 8-9.

same manner as political parties or fraternal organizations may be analyzed. A union consciously or unconsciously adopts a certain peculiar form or structure in order to aid it in accomplishing certain aims; and it accepts certain methods of procedure for the same reason. No institution would come into being were it not intended, deliberately or fortuitously, to effect certain changes in the course of human affairs. And no form of organized labor would exist unless wage workers hoped to obtain through its agency some improvement in living and working conditions. These statements are little short of axiomatic. In fact, as has been indicated, both the structure and the functions of a labor organization or of any other social institution are the visible and tangible results of underlying forces and causes which spring out of the physical and social environment. The analysis of a labor organization or of its political influence is, therefore, a study in social mechanics.

Everybody is more or less familiar with inertia in everyday life. The runner, the bicyclist, the automobile driver, the railway engineer, all must reckon with that tendency of a moving body to continue moving forward in a straight line; and likewise they must not overlook the resistance of a stationary object to the forces which endeavor to put it in motion. Now, it is not as generally understood that inertia is also encountered in the social and political life of the community. Our customs, our tradi-

tions, our laws, our constitutions, our creeds and our rituals all constitute forces which resist change. The past ever has its restraining hand upon the present; the past is a factor which must always be reckoned with in a study of the present.

In the great majority of cases, a given structure or form of government or of a labor organization more truly represents a past than a present balance of forces; and it is also a factor in determining the present-time attitude of those adhering to the government or the labor organization in question. After an institution has been developed and has crystallized into certain forms, this somewhat inelastic structure usually serves as a modifying and conserving force or influence. Consequently, group and institutional inertia must be reckoned with in any careful study of social and institutional forms. American legal and constitutional forms have greatly modified the course of events in American national life. The existence of social customs and habits also tends to prevent rapid and far-reaching changes in ideals. The psychology of the American has undoubtedly lagged behind the unusually rapid changes which have taken place in industry during recent generations. The American workingmen and other Americans as well have been too individualistic to cope effectively with the great and steadily growing combinations of capital; to many of them yet cling the restless and impatient vitality and self-assurance of the frontier. The effect of

social inertia is also plainly visible in the ideals, the concepts and the psychology of the unionist. The point of view of the average unionist is still measurably affected and modified by ideals and concepts crystallized during the outgrown era of small scale, nonintegrated industry. Again, overworked and undertrained workers will have a narrower vision than more efficient and better trained workers. But the Great War has caused American unionists cheerfully and loyally to accept changes which promise to undermine the traditional philosophy of organized labor.

Slavery and serfdom are heritages which the past offers to the wage-earning class of to-day. The prevalent idea that the employee is a "protégé" of the employer is old and dies hard. Organized labor is, in fact, a token of emancipation. In struggling upward toward industrial democracy the workers are seriously hampered by the lingering and still potent ideas and ideals developed during generations of subordination and of noncitizenship. As a consequence, the evolution of the new social psychology is retarded and modified by the old and outgrown folkways as to the relation between employers and employees. It is also affected by survivals in the form of rabid and irrational national patriotism, racial antagonisms and concepts as to the desirability of different forms of work and service. The events of 1914 and 1915 conclusively prove that in times of national stress and danger the old catch-

words and phrases are still powerful and compelling; but in 1917 and 1918 newer and finer watchwords, such as social solidarity and world democracy, were vigorously competing with the old and also with the familiar slogans of organized labor. But when the life of the nation is no longer menaced by war, the phenomenon of union loyalty again bulks large among the members of American labor organizations.

In the past, economic life in America has been abnormal. The United States has developed closely in touch with an ever westward moving frontier. This contact with new land and with untouched natural resources has reflected a peculiar combination of light and shadow into our national life. The activity of wage earners in American life and history has, therefore, been characterized by certain marked peculiarities. The presence of free land and the absence of European class demarcations have furnished a safety valve which has in a large measure prevented the growth of class consciousness. But, on the other hand, the gift of the ballot gave the wage earners of America early in our national history a position of considerable political and economic importance.

Writers and speakers of all shades of opinion from extreme radicalism to "safe and sane" conservatism are prone to allude to the decade immediately preceding the War as a transitional era in regard to the relations between labor and capital

and in regard to the unrest and discontent manifested by American wage earners; but a more careful and extended examination of our national history reveals many so-called transitional eras and epochs of agitation among the wage earners of the nation. Discontent among members of the wage-earning class and of the middle class is by no means confined to the period subsequent to the Civil War. The wage earners of the pre-Civil War period were also restless and discontented; they expressed their views and their demands in terms which sound quite similar to those used by the spokesmen of organized labor to-day; and, as in recent years, discontent found tangible expression in agitation and legislation, actual or proposed.

For ages the regeneration of the world has been the goal toward which religious and social reformers have struggled. From time to time men have come forward passionately and fanatically to present some one particular modification in our social, political or religious mechanism as the panacea for all the ills which afflict this old world. Many and dissimilar Utopias, from Plato's *Republic* to Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and Upton Sinclair's recent venture, have been promulgated by dreamers and thinkers of very different mental caliber and of varying imaginative capacity. There have been Utopias communistic and anarchistic, Utopias rural and urban, Utopias of the simple life type and those employing a multitude of intricate labor-saving, nat-

ural power utilizing devices, Utopias great and Utopias small, Utopias formal and informal, and so on in an almost infinite variety. Perhaps no nation, clime or race has been entirely bereft of Utopia builders.

The United States has been favored with its share of reformers of the single idea type,—the promulgators of Utopian ideals. Many are the various reforms, fantastic and otherwise, which have found at least a handful of adherents upon American soil; only three have received the support of a majority of the nation. These three cure-alls—the popular patent medicines for the body politic—are manhood suffrage, universal and compulsory free public education, and free homesteads for actual settlers. In these three movements the wage earners of the nation have played a leading part.

The birth of the American nation is almost coincident with the Industrial Revolution. In a peculiar sense, it is true that the development of the United States is dependent upon industrial progress. Consequently, in American history, a knowledge of the ideals and demands of the wage earner is an essential; and it may confidently be asserted that the common man, the wage earner, has played a notable, but not spectacular, rôle in the political evolution of our nation. Organized labor is to-day an efficient conservator of American democracy; the wage-earning population is helping to teach the American people the principles of democracy. Soon after the

inception of the American nation the wage earner became a factor to reckon with and a power capable of modifying the course of events and the evolution of governmental structure. Americans have frequently written concerning the part which the West or the frontier has played in our history; but it is the modest purpose of this small volume to trace briefly the influence of the wage earner in American history. The frontier has had a gradually diminishing influence; and to-day the frontier is a thing of the past. On the contrary, the wage earners' influence may be expected to increase in importance as the years go by.

CHAPTER II

EPOCHS IN THE HISTORY OF ORGANIZED LABOR

It is not within the scope of this volume to discuss in detail the history of labor organizations, of industrial progress or of social unrest. In order, however, clearly to trace the political influence of the American workingman it is necessary, or at least desirable, to present an outline of the epochs or eras in American industrial and labor history. These two forms of history are intimately and indissolubly interrelated. The ideals, the methods and the progress of American labor organizations reflect quite faithfully changes in methods of doing business, the enlargement of the competitive sphere, alterations in price levels, modifications in the standards of living, and in the attitude and organization of employers.¹ As different industries pass through the various stages of industrial evolution at different epochs, so sundry labor organizations adopt different methods at different periods in their history. In discussing the epochs or periods in the industrial history of the United States, it

¹ Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, c. I.

should be borne in mind that some industries and certain labor organizations lag behind or precede the general industrial movements of the period under consideration.

A study of the history of labor organizations in this country warrants the following brief generalizations in regard to tendencies. A period of prosperity tends to increase the numbers and the strength of organized labor. The workers combine in order to share in the benefits of improved business conditions and to obtain a shorter working day and other advantages. At such a time both political and direct methods, involving the use of such union weapons as the strike and the boycott, are usually resorted to. In a period in which prices of the necessities of life are rapidly rising, labor organizations tend to adopt direct (nonpolitical) methods,—as, for example, in 1833-1837, during the Civil War, and in recent years. When the price level rises rapidly political action is too slow, and its effects are too uncertain and too indirect. Consequently, immediate results are demanded in the face of the higher cost of living. In periods of depression, labor organizations almost invariably suffer losses.

The above-mentioned points relate only to tendencies. Other forces may be at work at the same time which neutralize, overcome or obscure these tendencies. For example, the forties and the early fifties marked a period of prosperity; but during that time labor organizations were weak—due in a large

measure as is indicated elsewhere to the rapid development of facilities to get to western land. In recent years—since about 1898—the bitter opposition manifested by certain large employers and associations of business men toward unions has been a potent factor in retarding the growth of organized labor in the United States.

Again, it must not be forgotten that unions may be affected differently by similar complexes of circumstances and conditions. Some unions may lose in membership during a period of prosperity, while others may gain in a time of depression. No two types of workers have been subjected to exactly the same economic pressure, the relations between workers and their employers vary greatly in different lines of business, the possibility of displacement by other workers or by machines likewise changes from trade to trade and from occupation to occupation, and finally price levels and standards of living are subject to rapid modifications. This exceedingly complex situation is further complicated by the institutional lag or inertia exhibited by organizations of labor. The influence, conservative or radical, of the capable and aggressive leader must not be neglected. Samuel Gompers, for example, is a factor who cannot be overlooked in any careful consideration of the evolution of the American Federation of Labor. The autocratic and imperious leader has played an important rôle in labor organizations as well as in the affairs of nations. The appeal to the

passions and emotions figures in union matters as well as in party politics.²

To outline significant epochs in the history of labor organizations—epochs which possess real points of difference—is difficult. Understanding that the lines of demarcation are not in all cases clean cut, the following seven epochs in American labor history are presented in order to assist in understanding the political influence of the working-man in the United States:

1. Before 1825. This period, covering the history of the colonies and of the first half century after the Declaration of Independence, is our pre-factory stage of industrial development. Labor organizations are found only in the latter portion of this period; and these consisted only of a few local and temporary trade societies.

2. 1825-1837. The American factory system finds its beginning in this short interval. The second epoch is one of extraordinary and premature organization of labor.

3. 1838-1857. The period of humanitarianism.

4. 1859-1873. The Civil War period.

5. 1876-1895. This epoch is characterized by the enlargement of the business unit, unusual middle class agitation, the rise and decline of the Knights of Labor, and the birth of the American Federation of Labor.

² Carlton, "Essentials in the Study of Labor Organizations." *The Scientific Monthly*, August, 1916.

6. 1896-1914. The early years of this period constituted the era of the "trust" and of trade or craft unionism. The American Federation adopted a fairly definite political program in 1906 which in more recent years it is beginning to repudiate; and employers' associations of the anti-union type increased in strength during this epoch.

7. 1914 —. The Present. It is worthy of notice that the first five epochs are terminated by periods of depression. The remainder of this chapter is an attempt to fill in the outlines of these seven epochs; and, in fact, the remaining chapters of the book deal with the labor movements and demands of the different historical intervals here outlined.

The occupation of the typical American colonist was farming; and each farmer in the North was also a crude mechanic. He made many of the implements and tools needed upon the farm; and he constructed the furniture used in the home. The clothing and the boots and shoes worn by the members of the family were their own handiwork. The manual laborers of the period were divided into three classes: wage earners, indentured servants, and slaves. Scarcity of labor led farmers to resort to the method of exchanging work,—in harvesting, house and barn raisings, and the like. The demand for labor also stimulated the kidnaping of whites to be bound out as indentured servants after a voyage across the Atlantic; and for like reasons Negroes

were imported as slaves. The poor immigrant was indentured or forced to become a wage earner or a tenant. The ownership of the best land was obtained by a few; and the ownership of the best land carried with it the control of the chief opportunities for obtaining wealth. Early uprisings, like Bacon's Rebellion, were protests against the direction of colonial affairs by a wealthy landowning or commercial oligarchy. The landowners and the merchants were in control of the colonial political machinery.

In Colonial New England, the oligarchy of Puritans minutely regulated the private and public life of all members. The wage earner and the indentured servant were there, as elsewhere in the colonies, denied political rights and privileges; but they were obliged to submit to rigorous regulation. Many were the attempts legally to fix the wages of artisans; and it was not uncommon in the early history of Massachusetts Colony to impress labor when needed. "In the harvest time, artificers and mechanics, compelled by the constable, must leave their crafts, unless they had harvesting of their own, and betake themselves to the fields of their neighbors needing them."⁸ In such cases, the wages to be paid were fixed by law. This service was forced like military service, and was considered necessary for the welfare of the community. There was

⁸Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, vol. I, p. 82.

much opposition "among the master workmen and the better class of common laborers against the arbitrary wages decreed by courts." ⁴

The colonial governments of Massachusetts, Plymouth and Connecticut were not democratic in the modern sense of the term. The various and interesting governmental controversies in those colonies which led to the establishment of a form of representative government were chiefly between two classes, the gentlemen—propertied or learned men—and the skilled mechanics and small freeholders. The great mass of wage earners and the indentured servants were outside the pale of political rights. Indeed, the rights of the common man did not receive definite recognition in America until the rise of Jacksonian democracy.

The American colonists were pushed into the War of the Revolution by a well organized and coherent minority. Excepting Virginia, the typical leader of the patriots was a member of the middle class. Until stirred by energetic leaders or menaced by hostile armies, the great mass of the common people did not exhibit enthusiastic opposition to Great Britain. It is also true that the separation from England did not materially change the condition or status of the mass of workingmen. During the revolutionary period, at the time when freedom was a familiar watchword, the hours of work

⁴Wright, *Industrial Evolution of the United States*, p. 114.

for wage earners were excessive and their wages low. At the end of the eighteenth century while the poor were hard-pressed, facing lawsuits, the coming of the sheriff and the debtors' prison, men engaged in trade were making large profits. Labor was cheap, trade unions were not yet in existence, and profits were large.⁵

Before 1825, a few local and short-lived labor societies were organized. As early as the middle of the eighteenth century, general meetings of the printers in a town were called from time to time for the purpose of discussing matters relating to the trade. In the last decade of the century, at least two attempts were made in New York City to form a union of printers. The second organization held together for about five years; it prepared and obtained the adoption of a complete wage scale. The tailors of Baltimore were temporarily organized in 1795.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century many benevolent societies composed of workingmen came into being. The cordwainers—shoemakers—of New York City and of Philadelphia were fairly well organized; and, in both cities, the members of this labor organization were fined for conspiracy to raise wages. In 1815, the cordwainers of Pittsburgh were also penalized for a conspiracy to raise

⁵ See Weeden, *Economic and Social History of New England*, vol. 2, p. 825; Myers, *History of Great American Fortunes*, vol. 1, p. 61; Adams and Sumner, *Labor Problems*, pp. 506-508.

wages and to prevent nonunionists from working with union cordwainers. The reporter of the case in his "Preface" made the following interesting observations. "The verdict of this jury is most important to the manufacturing interests of the community; it puts an end to those associations which have been so prejudicial to the successful enterprise of the capitalists of the western county. But this case is not important to this county alone; it proves beyond the possibility of doubt, that notwithstanding the adjudications in New York and Philadelphia, there still exist in those cities combinations which extend their deleterious influence to every part of the union." * The New York Typographical Society held together from 1809 to 1818. In 1819, a newspaper referred to the "habit of association among the workingmen to enhance the price of labor."

The reason assigned for the organization of the printers of New York City in 1809 is significant. "Progression distinguished the opening decade of the nineteenth century in America. . . . Vast improvements had taken place in agriculture, commerce, manufactures and the useful arts. . . . These improved conditions had wrought a change in the mode of living. The standard had gradually increased. Enlarging needs of the producers demanded a greater return for their labor. Printers

* *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 4, pp. 16-17.

were especially alive to their requirements, and felt that the wage scale which had been handed down by the association that had lapsed in 1804 was inadequate to meet the exactions of the period."⁷

By 1825, after the young nation had practically recovered from the effects of the panic of 1819, the local trade societies began to assume greater importance; and the second epoch in the history of organized labor in America opened. Two years later, the first city federation of the various trade societies in a city, called at that time a trades' union, was organized in Philadelphia. From 1827 to 1831, political agitation was the favorite form of expression; and the trades' unions fostered workingmen's parties in the cities of New York, Philadelphia and Boston. But these parties were soon shattered; and for three or four years events moved slowly.⁸

The end of the second period witnessed the most spectacular and illuminating episode yet recorded in the history of American labor organizations. The three or four years immediately preceding the severe panic of 1837 are very instructive to the student of labor organizations. During this short space of time the craftsmen of the towns and cities of the coast states passed from a condition of weak organization to a fairly well coördinated system of labor unions culminating in a national federation. Prices

⁷ *History of Typographical Union*, No. 6, p. 41.

⁸ Carlton, "The Workingmen's Party of New York City." *Political Science Quarterly*, 1907, vol. 22, p. 401.

and the cost of living went up like a rocket. Wheat flour rose in New York City from \$5 a barrel in 1834 to \$12 in March, 1837; in Baltimore from \$6.75 on June 4, 1836, to \$10.50 on December 17 of the same year. Edward Atkinson estimated that the cost of living to the average workingman rose 66 per cent from April, 1834, to October, 1836.⁹ The upward sweep came so quickly that the worker could not utilize the famous American safety valve and escape to the westward moving frontier. Organization, using the direct methods of the strike and the boycott, was the only practicable way of coping with the upward moving cost of living. Political action, as has been indicated, was altogether too slow. Local unions, city federations, national trade unions and the first national federation of labor, the National Trades' Union, all appeared with almost magical rapidity.

The percentage of the total number of American urban wage earners organized in 1835 and 1836 has probably never as yet been exceeded. A New York newspaper stated in 1836 that "it is a low calculation when we estimate that two-thirds of the workingmen in the city numbering several thousand persons" are members of labor organizations. Employers' associations were also formed. Picketing, the ostracism of scabs, the open shop problem and jurisdictional difficulties were all pushed to the front.

⁹ Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, p. 34.

In less than half a decade, unionism ran the entire scale from weakness to over-organization; and, then, this hot-house, ephemeral growth of unionism vanished completely in the chaos of the panic of 1837.

The second era witnessed the infancy of the factory system and also the rapid rise of the mill town. The evils of city and of factory life quickly made their appearance. Agitation could easily be carried on in the mill town. The wage earners were restless; and could be easily brought together in mass meetings. They demanded free schools, shorter working hours, and a long list of other items. In 1832, the workingmen complained that the "detestable Combination of Merchants in Boston pledged themselves on the 18th of May last to drive to starvation or submission the Shipwrights, Caulkers, and Gravers of the City." Seth Luther, the leading labor agitator of the early thirties, declared that women were sometimes whipped to drive them to greater exertion in the mills. In an address to a labor society in 1835, it was asserted that, "already has grasping avarice and monopoly shorn us of many of our rights, already has aristocracy reared its hideous form in our country, and is making rapid strides toward enslaving us forever." In 1833, the working people of Manayunk, Pennsylvania, in an address to the public objected to the thirteen-hour day, opposed attempts to reduce wages, and complained of insufficient wages and of the treatment of child

laborers.¹⁰ The Philadelphia cabinet makers in 1834 in their struggle for better wages were involved in "lawsuits, harassing and ruinous in their effects."¹¹

The recent agitation in regard to the low wages paid women workers has attracted much attention and has been given a large amount of publicity through the newspapers; but it is not the first agitation of its kind in the United States. Perhaps the first American crusade against low wages was carried on by Mathew Carey, a Philadelphia publisher, from 1828 to the time of his death in 1839. In 1830, Carey estimated there were between 18,000 and 20,000 "working women" in the four cities of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. "At least 12,000 of these," he said, "could not earn by constant employment for 16 hours out of the 24, more than \$1.25 per week." Because of the recent discussions in regard to the relation between low wages and prostitution, it is interesting to learn that Mathew Carey offered a prize, valued at one hundred dollars, for the best essay "on the inadequacy of the wages generally paid to seamstresses, spoolers, spinners, shoe binders, etc., to procure food, raiment, and lodging; on the effects of that inade-

¹⁰ Mangold, *The Labor Argument in American Protective Tariff Discussions*, Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, p. 74.

¹¹ Deibler, *The Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union*. Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, p. 42.

quacy upon the happiness and morals of those females and their families, when they have any; and on the probability that those low wages frequently force poor women to the choice between dishonor and absolute want of common necessities." This prize was won by a well-known social worker of that period, Rev. Joseph Tuckerman.

Many were the remedies proposed by Carey, but he does not seem to have considered the organization of trade unions, or the interference by governmental authority. Considerable weight was placed upon the altruism of the employer. A committee appointed at one of the meetings called by Carey, believed that a complete remedy for the conditions in the sweated industries of the time was impracticable, but mitigation was possible. "The mitigation must wholly depend on the humanity and the sense of justice of those by whom they are employed, who, for the honor of human nature, it is to be supposed, have not been aware of the fact, that the wages they have been paying were inadequate to the purchase of food, raiment, and lodging; and who, now that the real state of the case is made manifest, will probably, as they certainly ought to, increase those wages." Carey received little aid in his efforts to benefit the poor women wage earners. The public was indifferent and could not be aroused as it has been in recent years. He complained in 1830 that he had not "been able to secure in New York, Boston, or Philadelphia, one active, efficient,

zealous, ardent coöperator." In 1833, Carey issued a fruitless "Appeal to the Wealthy of the Land, Ladies as Well as Gentlemen."¹² This was, of course, a middle class movement.

The first American factories were textile factories; and in these early factories appeared many of the phenomena with which men and women of recent decades have been made familiar,—women and child labor outside the home, paternalism, the company store, the blacklist, the strike, the street parade of striking workers. An industrial feudalism of a high type was developed by the proprietors of the New England textile factories of the thirties and forties. The great majority of the workers in factories were female. As early as 1822, a textile factory near Baltimore exhibited many of the characteristics which nearly three-quarters of a century later made Pullman famous. The company provided a school, a church, dwellings, and a company store for the use of its employees.

The New England mill operators often sent "runners" or "drummers" to the rural districts at considerable distance from the mills, in order to get girl workers for their factories. The unmarried female employees were expected to board at the company boarding-houses; and these houses were owned and regulated by the company; even the price of board was fixed by the mill owners. Among the

¹² *Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners in the United States*, vol. 9, pp. 123-133.

rules formulated by the Hamilton Manufacturing Company, of Lowell (1848) are the following: Without special permission from the company, only employees may be boarded; the doors must be closed at ten P.M.; keepers must report the names of boarders not attending public worship; the sidewalks in front of the houses must be kept free from snow, or the company will clear the walk and charge the expense to the keeper. The employees frequently complained of the crowded conditions in these company boarding-houses. Among the factory rules of the same company were the following: Two weeks' notice of leaving employment must be given; all contracts are considered to be for one year; and each employee must attend public worship on Sunday.¹³ In some cases if an employee left the employ of the company in less than one year, a "regular discharge" was not granted; or, in other words, he was blacklisted.¹⁴ Certain corporations in recent years have followed a similar policy in regard to "undesirable" employees.

In the forties, the company store was by no means uncommon. The following interesting notice was posted in the "Crompton Mills" in 1843: "Notice—Those employed at these mills and works will take notice, that a store is kept for their accommoda-

¹³ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 7, pp. 135-141.

¹⁴ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 8, pp. 153-154. Also, *Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners*, vol. 10, p. 24.

tion, where they can purchase the best of goods at fair prices, and it is expected that all will draw goods from said store. Those who do not are informed that there are plenty of others who would be glad to take their place at less wages."¹⁵ The so-called "iron-clad oath" was also utilized: "We also agree not to be engaged in any combination whereby the work may be impeded or the company's interest in any work injured; if we do, we agree to forfeit to the use of the company the amount of wages that may be due us at the time."¹⁶

The paternalism of the mill owners was by no means entirely agreeable to the young women employees. The editor of the *Lynn Record* (1836) stated their case. "These ladies have been imposed upon egregiously by the aristocratic and offensive employers, assuming to be their lords and masters and dictating to them not only what they shall eat and drink and wherewithal they shall be clothed, but when they shall eat, drink and sleep, and how much they shall pay for it." As a consequence, the girls adopted resolutions complaining of the "yoke which has been prepared for us."¹⁷

The third epoch cannot accurately be called a period in the history of unionism. The labor move-

¹⁵ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 7, p. 50.

¹⁶ *Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners*, vol. 10, p. 25.

¹⁷ *Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners*, vol. 10, p. 30.

ment is in a large degree absorbed in others of this interesting historical interval. The decade of the forties and the first half of the fifties are noted for humanitarian movements of many varieties. The labor movement of this period is of the reform type; it savors little of "pure and simple" trade unionism,—that is, few labor organizations of this epoch consisted only of wage earners and exhibited definite manifestations of class consciousness. A galaxy of movements ranging from transcendentalism to Fourierism and Mormonism, and from abolitionism to Graham-breadism and mesmerism, are placed in the foreground. This era of approximately fifteen years was a unique interval in our labor history. The decade of the thirties and that of the sixties present more of true unionism than do the forties and fifties. Yet, industrial progress continued at a rapid pace; there was no backward step until the panic year of 1857.

The reason for this break in the history of American trade unionism evidently must be found in connection with the economic conditions of the period. The rapid development of railways at this time made it increasingly easy for workers to go from the East to the farm lands of the rapidly growing West. The discovery of gold in California also stimulated westward migration. The restless and daring men who would have been the leaders of the wage earners under other conditions, moved in a stream toward the setting sun.

The existence of this unique safety valve caused the hiatus in the history of labor organizations in the United States. The immigrants who came to fill the places of the westward moving Americans did not at first prove to be good material for organization; and many of the leaders among the German-American workingmen of the period were champions of coöperation and of communistic schemes. While unionism of the pure and simple type appears in sporadic instances in the forties and fifties, the opportunity easily to get western land, the development of railways which made the westward movement comparatively easy, and the firm belief that a free and inalienable homestead for each and every family would solve the labor problem and keep up wages in the East, prevented the growth of strong and stable unionism.

In one of the well-known textbooks on the industrial history of the United States is found the following characterization of the twenty years between the panics of 1837 and 1857. This interval of a score of years "witnessed the most remarkable industrial development yet achieved in the United States. The wealth of the country was quadrupled in this 'golden age.' Riches multiplied more rapidly than population. Our per capita wealth in 1860 was more than double that of 1840, more than three times that of 1790."¹⁸ Neverthe-

¹⁸ Coman, *Industrial History of the United States* (new ed.), p. 232.

less, this "golden era," this epoch of reformism and of "hot air" was one of restlessness for the workers of the country; and wages were by no means high.

The "highest average" wage paid in 1850 in any state to male employees in wrought iron works, cotton factories or woolen factories was less than \$1.30 per day. According to the Census for 1850, the average wage for all states paid to male factory employees was only sixty-five cents per day. Female workers received much less.¹⁹ In 1852, according to *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, "there are many journeymen shoemakers now employed on ordinary work, twelve to fifteen hours a day, who earn less than fifty cents a day." The *New York Tribune* is authority for the statement that there were in 1847 about 10,000 seamstresses in New York City. Those working on "common white shirts" received six cents each and earned from \$0.75 to \$1.12½ per week. Cap makers were reported to work for a meager wage fifteen to eighteen hours per day. About 3,000 girls employed in "bookfolding" received about \$2.00 to \$2.50 per week.²⁰

The facts in regard to wages and living conditions before the Civil War are very difficult to establish. The data are fragmentary. Again, much of the information as to wages is colored and local,

¹⁹ See *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, vol. 26, p. 384.

²⁰ Quoted in *Herald of Truth*, 1847, pp. 115-117.

or combined unwisely. Writers favoring the workers have felt the necessity of drawing a dark and repelling picture, while, on the other hand, the friends of manufacture only noticed the most favorable conditions. It seems, however, fairly well established that both money and real wages have on the whole increased since that time, and the average number of hours of daily toil have decreased. But, on the other hand, the intensity of the exertion of the average industrial worker and the nervous strain to which he is subjected have increased many fold.²¹

The Civil War marks a very distinct period in our industrial history. Without much exaggeration, it may be said to have ushered in a second industrial revolution in the United States. In the decade of the fifties are to be found the foreshadowings of the big centralized industry of recent decades. This movement was most pronounced in the telegraph and transportation business.²² In the same decade many signs of the permanent organization of workingmen may be discerned. The large scale industry of to-day traces its origin back to and even beyond the Civil War; and permanent and strong organizations of workingmen have

²¹ For further data see Carlton, "Discontent, Wages and Living Conditions, 1800-1860." *International Molders' Journal*, March, 1916.

²² Fite, *Social and Industrial Conditions during the Civil War*, c. 6.

evolved alongside of combinations of capital. Nevertheless, the War greatly accelerated both movements. The swiftly rising prices of the war period, as in the thirties, pinched the workers and again caused rapid progress in organizing the workers into unions. The great national crisis closed the careers of many picturesque reform movements of the two decades immediately preceding the firing on Fort Sumter. The attention of the nation was centered upon the War, and after its close upon the Reconstruction and the many financial problems which came as the disagreeable aftermath of internal strife.

While the War was in progress both prices and wages rose rapidly; but the former outstripped the latter. According to the Aldrich Report, real wages, or wages measured in terms of commodities consumed, declined during the War in the following ratios: 1861, 100; 1862, 87; 1863, 74; 1864, 66; 1865, 66; 1866, 79. Unrest as well as organization inevitably appeared; and the great labor leader of the sixties, William H. Sylvis, saw "a money aristocracy—proud, imperious, and dishonest." Even at this time workingmen were beginning to feel that there was little opportunity for them to pass out of their class: Once a workingman always a workingman, was becoming an accepted maxim among the workers. When the war ended labor organizations of the trade union type were multiplying and waxing strong. The re-

turn of the soldiers to peaceful pursuits, the continued influx of immigrants from the old world, and the growing power of industrial combinations, all contributed to arouse the wage earners of the nation to unwonted activity.

The history of labor organizations from the close of the Civil War to the end of the fifth epoch in 1895 is a record of ebb and flow, agitation, organization and disintegration. It is, indeed, a strange blend of unionism and politics, of individualism and socialism, of strikes, greenbackism and coöperation, of prosperity, panics and concentration of industry. The quarter of a century after the War is pre-eminently one of preparation; in it are laid the economic and psychological foundations upon which have been built, in a large measure, the trade union organizations of to-day. Movements, ephemeral and inchoate, but grand in conception, hasten nervously across the stage. At intervals during the period writers in the numerous labor papers declare now is a time of transition and that organization at this particular moment will be unusually fruitful of good results. The workers, distrustful and individualistic but harassed by the fear of monopoly, the competition of unskilled labor, the introduction of machinery and lower wages, cohere for a brief period under the pressure of extraordinary conditions or of the influence of enthusiastic leaders, only to repel each other as their financial skies appear to clear. But, by the end of the period,

the labor organization had become one of the permanent institutions of the nation.

The panic of 1873 wiped out not a few labor organizations; but, unlike the situation in 1837, many unions weathered the storm. In the eighties came the phenomenal growth and the beginning of the decline of the first powerful and coherent national labor organization in the United States, the Knights of Labor. The decade of the eighties also witnessed the birth of the American Federation of Labor. The membership of the Federation increased from less than 50,000 in 1881, the year of its formation, to about 275,000 in 1893. During the period from 1893 to 1898 inclusive, the membership remained practically unchanged.²⁸

The eighties were years of great industrial development. The number of wage earners engaged in manufacture increased from nearly two and three-fourths in 1880 to four and one-fourth millions in 1890,—an increase of about fifty-five per cent. in ten years. The railway mileage of the United States expanded from 93,296 in 1880 to 163,579 in 1890,—an increase of over seventy-five per cent. in one decade. This was the era of "tooth and claw" competition. The trust appeared on the scene; and the small business was engaged in fighting for its life,—and losing on many industrial fields. Independent industries and proprietors were

²⁸ See *Proceedings of the Convention of the A. F. of L.*, 1915, p. 45.

being ruthlessly crushed in order that a comparatively small number of big businesses might survive and flourish; and in the process the employee inevitably suffered.

The corporate form of business organization was absorbing a larger and larger percentage of the industrial activity of the nation; "and this implies a momentous change in the rights, responsibilities, and economic theories of the owners of capital. Moreover, it involves the creation of a new class of men, not entrepreneurs in the old sense, but organizers of already established concerns into larger units."²⁴ The employer in many industries no longer came into personal touch with his employees; and the old personal relations no longer existed to soften and humanize the treatment of his employees. Capitalism was growing stronger; and immigration was multiplying. A new era was, indeed, in the making; and the wage earners were being prepared for more definite and firm organization. But, as the frontier line faded, the old individualistic ideals of the frontier and of the pre-Civil War period still prevailed. These long maintained and much lauded ideals were not displaced without considerable social friction; they died hard. Strikes were of frequent occurrence and the boycott became a popular weapon. The spirit of solidarity among the wage earners was, however, still

²⁴ Beard, *Contemporary American History*, p. 36.

weak. The "separating influences of shops in one town, theories about general principles, language, nationality, or the division of labor, split the workers on one and the same product into bickering factions." ²⁵

The score of years between the panics of 1873 and 1893 marked an extremely peculiar period in American history. It was an epoch of great unrest and discontent. The panic of 1873 was followed by an extraordinary amount of unemployment, suffering and unrest. In the latter part of the seventies, many secret organizations of working men appeared. Labor difficulties culminated with the railway strikes of 1877. These were precipitated by cuts in the rate of wages. The chairman of an "Immense Mass Meeting of Workingmen" held in New York City in June of the centennial year, declared: "The lands, the money, the property of the nation have passed into the hands of the few, and the many are idle, homeless and starving." The agitation and unrest among the workers led to repressive measures on the part of various city officials. ²⁶

In the middle years of the decade social unrest reached a maximum. In no other decade "of our history has there been such wide-spread evidence

²⁵ Cherouny, *The Historical Development of the Labor Question*.

²⁶ McNeill, *The Labor Movement*, p. 147.

of discontent. Not only did our workmen in mills, factories, and mines, and on the railways protest against existing conditions of employment, but there was profound disappointment and unrest on the part of the sections of society which lie between the artisan and the rich. Organized labor struck and boycotted; legislatures passed factory acts and established boards of arbitration; men of property and intelligence, with gospel zeal, advocated the seizure by the state of economic rent; while others turned sympathetically to socialism as presented in the attractive guise of 'nationalism.' Anarchy even obtained a foothold. Strikes were no new thing, but not until this period were they recognized as a part of the routine of industrial life."²⁷ The dark pictures painted by the leaders among the wage earners and the farmers of this decade should be studied. The following is from the pen of the head of the then powerful Knights of Labor. "Absorbed in the task of getting large dividends, the employer seldom inquired of his superintendent how he managed the business intrusted to his keeping, or how he treated the employees. In thousands of places throughout the United States, as many superintendents, foremen or petty bosses are interested in stores, corner groceries or saloons. In many places the employee is told plainly that he must deal at the store, or get his liquor from the saloon in which his boss has an interest; in others

²⁷ Dewey, *National Problems*, pp. 40-41.

he is given to understand that he must deal in these stores or saloons, or forfeit his situation." ²⁸

The number of establishments in which strikes occurred in 1886 was 10,053, or over four times as many as were affected in 1885. This number was not exceeded until 1900; and the number of employees thrown out of work in 1886 by strikes was not exceeded until 1894. The big strike on the Missouri Pacific system took place in 1886. The anarchist episode in Chicago, known as the Haymarket riot, occurred in May of the same year. This is also the year of the Henry George campaign in New York City. In 1887, many "anti-poverty" societies were formed. Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, the last book upon Utopian socialism to attract much attention, appeared in 1888; its publication was followed by the establishment of many "Nationalist societies." In 1894, 660,425 employees were thrown out of work by strikes,—a total not exceeded in the period, 1881-1905, for which the *Bureau of Labor* furnished statistics. The famous Pullman strike occurred in that year; and the Homestead strike in 1892. The Populist party, in 1892, polled over a million votes; and gained twenty-two electoral votes.

As an aftermath of every great war comes a period of moral decline; and the years following the Civil War were no exception. Bribery, corrup-

²⁸ Powderly, *Labor; Its Rights and Wrongs*; also, in *North American Review*, May, 1886.

tion, political rings, stock watering and a fierce competitive struggle between business units were the order of the day. "It was the time when the American dollarocracy of beef, pills, soap, oil, or railroads became the world-wide synonym for the parvenu and the upstart. In literature it produced the cheap, wood-pulp, sensational daily, the *New York Ledger* type of magazine, the dime novel, and the works of Mary J. Holmes, Laura Jean Libby, and 'The Duchess.' In industry its dominant figures were Jay Gould and Jim Fiske. In politics it evolved the 'machine,' the ward heeler, and the political boss, with Tweed as the finished sample."²⁹

The widespread discontent bore as its legitimate fruit a variety of fantastic reform movements among the wage earners and the farmers. Indeed, the multiplicity of political reform movements, their weakness and lack of harmony are indicative of the bankruptcy of the reform movements of the type then prevailing. *Truth*, "A Journal for the Poor" and a radical paper, declared: "This journal is not the paid mouthpiece of either Trades' Unions, Knights of Labor, Anti-Monopoly Party, Greenback Party, Socialistic Labor Party, Liberal League, Patrons of Husbandry (Grangers), Farmers' Alliance, Irish Revolutionary Organizations, or any other Nihilistic, Communal or Socialistic organiza-

²⁹ Simons, *Social Forces in American History*, pp. 307-308.

tion. But it is the friend of every one of them." ³⁰

A "counter-reformation" was also started by many capitalists and middle class reformers to sweep aside the worst of the abuses of which the farmers and the wage workers complained.³¹ This "counter-reformation" originated in the eighties but has only attained considerable importance since the opening of the present century. Some of the early legislative results of this conciliatory program are the interstate commerce act of 1887, the law of 1888 providing for voluntary arbitration of disputes between railway employers and employees, the Sherman anti-trust act of 1890, and the income tax law of 1894. In 1886, President Cleveland sent a special message to Congress relating to the labor problem.

The attention of students in our colleges and universities was also attracted to labor and economic problems because of the economic revolution through which the nation was passing. The American Economic Association was organized in 1885; and the American Academy of Political and Social Science in 1889. The *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (Harvard) was first published in 1886; and the *Political Science Quarterly* (Columbia) appeared in the same year. Professor Ely's pioneer book on American labor problems, *The Labor Movement in America*, was also published in 1886.

³⁰ *Truth*, September 15, 1883, vol. 7.

³¹ Beard, *Contemporary American History*, pp. 303 ff.

With the defeat of the Democratic party in the spectacular campaign of 1896, and the beginning of the long era of rising prices, the discontent of the farmers became less and less acute. Restless and radical Kansas, for example, was gradually transformed into prosperous and contented Kansas; and the epoch of greenback and populist agitation drew to a close. As the end of the century approached came an extraordinary period of gigantic business combinations. This era of great activity in the formation of trusts was closely followed by years of unusual activity in union circles. The membership of the American Federation of Labor increased over sixfold in seven years, from 264,825 in 1897 to 1,676,200 in 1904. The latter figure remained, however, the high-water mark until 1911. In 1914, the membership of the Federation passed the two million mark. The total membership of all labor organizations in the United States, in 1916, was probably almost 3,000,000. The American quasi-syndicalist organization, the Industrial Workers of the World, was formed in 1905; it opposes political action.

During the period of phenomenal growth, 1898-1904, labor organizations avoided affiliations with reform movements; and labor kept clear of politics. In 1906, however, the American Federation of Labor, while refusing to countenance the organization of a separate labor party, adopted the policy of electing union men and the "friends" of

organized labor to political offices.⁸² Among the notable projects of the latter portion of the sixth epoch are the progressive movement, the agitation for conservation, and the enthusiastic demand for efficiency and scientific management, the optimistic belief that poverty can be abolished, and the initiation of systems of social insurance.

The year 1914 has been chosen to mark the opening of a new epoch. Now, it is, of course, somewhat hazardous to select a date so near to the present moment for this purpose, but the beginning of the great European war, the rapid rise in the cost of living, the reduction in the flow of immigration, and, finally, the entrance of the United States into the war, all point to the opening of a new era in American labor and industrial history. The foreshadowings of this epoch were discernible for a decade or even longer. The disappearance of the frontier was a phenomenon which portended far-reaching changes in American civilization. The fading of the frontier line, the growth of machine industry, and the elimination of many traditional forms of skill, give the so-called unskilled men an opportunity to override the democracy of the middle class as did the democracy of Jackson overwhelm the democracy or the liberalism of Jefferson and of John Quincy Adams. Labor partyism, progressivism, socialism and syndicalism are among the contending forms of uplift or of social emancipa-

⁸² See Chapter VIII.

tion which are competing in the national arena for the favor of the men who are toiling in our modern subdivided industries. As a consequence, there is reason to anticipate that labor organizations are to-day standing on the threshold of a new epoch in their history.

Furthermore, the Great War has brought the world, including the neutral as well as the warring nations, face to face with new and extraordinary economic conditions. In the warring nations, industry was being regulated and directed in the interests of national safety and national strength. When the gigantic struggle ended, there were excellent reasons for the expectation that industry in the contending nations will continue to be regulated and controlled quite rigidly in the interests of social welfare and national prestige or international needs. It was to be expected that the leaders of the nation would discern that a policy of centralized and definitely planned regulation and direction which succeeded in a time of military stress might also spell efficiency in days of peace. That harsh and repulsive instructor, war, taught lessons in regard to industrial efficiency which no alert and forward-looking people can afford to neglect.

In order to survive in the after-war competition, a nation will be obliged to adopt new policies of integration and to outline plans which will link labor and capital together in such a way as to reduce industrial warfare and raise the level of in-

dustrial efficiency. Social welfare, national efficiency, "integrated America" and world relationships were some of the stirring slogans which made a vivid impression upon the men and women of America during the war period. Wage earners as well as others felt the impulse due to new social ideals. And, moreover, for the first time in our history, this nation was swept "into the very center of world relationships." Isolated America no longer exists. But, unfortunately, the enthusiasm, the fine idealism and the solidarity so evident in the months of war are already very largely matters of history. The aftermath of war is again proving to be not good to look upon. As these words are being written (December, 1919) the United States is face to face with serious industrial disputes; and prominent Americans are trying hard to force the foreign policy of the nation back into the old grooves of the pre-war days.

CHAPTER III

ADOPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The American Revolution was not a struggle precipitated by the workingmen of the colonies; but during the time of agitation preceding the opening of hostilities, the agitators had been quite willing to accept the assistance of the mechanics and of the nonvoters. "In many elections to early revolutionary conventions and congresses, the disfranchised classes voted, sometimes on explicit invitation of the revolutionary committees and sometimes because it was not easy or desirable to stop them."¹ The Declaration of Independence with its emphasis upon equality and the rights of man doubtless made a forceful appeal to the workers of the period. The familiar phraseology of an oft-quoted sentence of the Declaration must have stirred the ambitions and emotions of the wage earners of that day. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." And to secure these rights, it was further

¹ West, *American History and Government*, p. 195.

asserted, governments are instituted. This radical document was written in an epoch which "favored strong families and the ascendancy of an upper class to an extent which our own day American States would not tolerate."² Our forefathers were not a group of altruists or supermen whose feet rarely touched the earth; they possessed weaknesses and prejudices similar to those of the men of to-day. From the earliest colonial times, class distinctions had been fostered by colonial laws and customs. The Declaration was a premature assertion of democracy. The democracy of 1776 has been aptly termed by Walter Weyl, a "shadow-democracy."

At the close of the Revolution many members of the middle and working classes of the country were in debt, poverty and misery. The infant industries of the new nation, artificially stimulated by the war and by the cessation of commerce with other nations, were menaced by the influx of manufactured goods from England. The issuance during the first years of the Revolution of large sums of paper money, which quickly depreciated and finally became practically worthless, complicated matters. Debt collection became the program of the period. The embattled farmer and the sturdy mechanic who fought at Bunker Hill and starved at Valley Forge came home to meet the debt collector and to face his creditors in the law courts.

² Schouler, *Americans of 1776*, p. 292.

"The lawyers were overwhelmed with cases. The courts could not try half that came before them." In New Hampshire, if the law providing for the imprisonment of debtors "had been rigorously executed in the autumn of 1785, it is probable that not far from two-thirds of the community would have been in prison."³ The small farmer, the mechanic and the men of the western portion of the country were hard hit. "As for the landless laborer, he toiled from sun to sun for a wage lower than that to-day earned by a newly arrived Hungarian immigrant."⁴ The great mass of small farmers and artisans felt that the Revolution had brought no advantage to them; it seemed to be only a mere transfer of control from England and the loyalists to the insistent merchants and money-lenders of the coast. The merchants and the creditor class were aggressively insistent in their demands. Unrest, mutterings, hatred and finally outbursts of wrath and insurrection, of which Shays's Rebellion was the most noted and considerable, followed. The mass, the "simple men," were stirred. One of the leaders in Shays's Rebellion expressed his idea of liberty in the following manner: "My boys, you are going to fight for liberty. If you wish to know what liberty is, I will tell you. It is for every man to do what he pleases, to make

³ McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, vol. I, c. I.

⁴ Weyl, *The New Democracy*, p. 11.

other folks do as you please to have them, and to keep folks from serving the devil." This crude expression of the keynote of the Declaration of Independence was full of menace to the propertied classes of the nation.

The propertied and conservative class clearly saw the danger. Property rights and vested interests were threatened by the impatience and wrath of the strenuous frontiersman. Commercial credit, contract rights and the validity of mortgages were menaced by the rising tide of the turbulent and naïve democracy of the frontier and of the wage earner. The differences of interest which existed between landowner, merchant and small manufacturer were to a considerable extent temporarily overlooked in the face of a visible common danger from the unrest of the despised proletariat.

Strong government, bulwarked property rights and bourgeoisie supremacy became the unexpressed but precious watchwords of the conservative leaders. State rights, localism and even the traditional idea that centralized government was synonymous with tyrannical government, were unceremoniously thrust into the background. The government under the Articles of Confederation was fast drifting toward anarchy; and the European nations stood eagerly awaiting the climax. The collectivist spirit was raising its hideous head. General Knox was ordered to ascertain the demands of the radicals of Massachusetts. "Their creed is," he reported,

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"that the property of the United States has been protected from confiscation of Britain by the joint exertions of all, and therefore ought to be the common property of all." In Rhode Island, the paper money faction obtained control of the legislature; and a "State trade" scheme was proposed. The State was to provide vessels and become an importing agent.

Such was the situation which led to the demand for a constitutional convention to amend and strengthen the Articles of Confederation. The constitutional convention was a semibusiness proposition. It was called for the specific purpose of formulating a plan for a stable, strong, business-like government which would place contract and property upon a firm legal foundation and bulwark those rights behind constitutional formulæ and court decisions.

The convention was composed of men representing the various propertied interests of the time. They represented the planters, the merchants and the bankers. According to Madison, one of the leaders of the convention, "the delegates to Annapolis and later to Philadelphia were brought together in response to the demands of the business men of the country, not to form an ideal plan of government, but such a practical plan as would meet the business need of the people."⁵ The delegates

⁵ McMaster, *Acquisition of Political, Social and Industrial Rights of Man in America*, p. 27.

were selected by the state legislatures; no opportunity was given for a popular election of the delegates. "Not one member represented in his immediate personal economic interests the small farming and mechanic classes." * These men differed in regard to many details; but, with the specter of Shays's Rebellion before them, they agreed that agrarianism must be suppressed and permanently controlled by a powerful governmental mechanism.

The Constitution was formulated behind closed doors; and the proceedings were very carefully concealed from the eyes and ears of the public. Only thirty to forty men actually took an active part in the work of the convention. That body exceeded its powers in formulating a new instrument of government instead of attempting to patch the old Articles of Confederation. The Constitution was not submitted to a popular vote. It was adopted by conventions called in the thirteen states for the purpose of ratifying or rejecting it. In all of the states, except New York, property qualifications restricted the right of suffrage. Professor Beard estimates that approximately three-fourths of the adult males were disqualified or failed to vote in the elections for delegates to the state conventions. Many of the nonproperty owners, the wage earners and the pioneer farmers were not allowed to cast votes for delegates.

* Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, p. 149.

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Furthermore, the group in favor of the adoption of the Constitution, called the Federalists, was well organized; they "got out their vote." The Federalists had sufficient funds to insure publicity for their side of the argument. They opened what in recent terminology is called a campaign of education. On the other hand, the opposition was scattered, apathetic and not well organized or financed. The touchstone of direct personal interest was lacking among the anti-Federalists. Finally, under pressure, anti-Federalist delegates were won over in the conventions—a device much used in more recent years.⁷ As a political factor in formulating or in ratifying the Constitution, the wage earner was of little or no importance. He was ignored or rather declared to be unworthy of consideration. The statement made by Ellsworth of Connecticut, during the discussion as to the restriction of slavery, illustrates the attitude of the farmers of the Constitution toward the wage-earning class of 1789. "As population increases poor laborers will be so plenty as to render slaves useless." Gerry of Massachusetts also deplored the effects of an "excess of democracy." Edmond Randolph declared that the members of the Convention found the origin of the political evils of the country "in the turbulence and follies of democracy."⁸

⁷ See Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, particularly pp. 324-325.

⁸ See Smith, *The Spirit of American Government*, c. 3.

The great landowners, the merchants, friends of American manufacture, the banking interests and the returning Tories, all favored the adoption of the Constitution; but the frontiersman, the small farmer, the debtor, the mechanic and other wage earners—men owning little or no property—opposed its adoption. While the question of the adoption or rejection of the Constitution was being discussed in New York, the workingmen of New York City showed their opposition to it by a big street demonstration in favor of rejection. In South Carolina, for example, the clerks, artisans and other workers of Charleston, and the small, upland farmers, opposed the adoption of the Constitution. The planters of the lowlands and the merchants of Charleston—the ruling elements of the State—favored the new form of government. The majority, deprived of the ballot and discriminated against by means of the gerrymander, were easily defeated in that State by an aggressive, able and united class the members of which were quite clear as to the benefits of a government which restrained the unruly radicals and uncouth frontiersmen.

Our federal Constitution has ever exerted a potent conservative or reactionary influence upon American life and progress. This document was drawn up in an era before the trust, the railway, the trade union, the world market, and before the numerous recent revolutionary discoveries and theories. Since it was formulated and adopted through

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the work and influence of the conservative and propertied interests of the period which were united and prodded into effective activity by the fear of foreign aggression and of unrest among the debtors and workers at home, that historic document is undemocratic. "It is often said that the United States Constitution established a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, but in the light of experience it may more truly be said to have provided the machinery for a government of the people, by the political majority, in behalf of the interests which control that majority."⁹ The Constitution has established extraordinary bulwarks around property rights. As conservative and judicial a writer as the President of Yale University has reached the conclusion that private property in this country is "in a stronger position as against the Government and Governmental authority than is the case in any country in Europe."¹⁰ The work of a convention composed chiefly of delegates representing the business interests of the country would necessarily be somewhat unsatisfactory to other classes in the nation. Paraphrasing President Lincoln, it may be said that no class in the community is good enough or altruistic enough to legislate for another. The enfranchised workingmen of a later period have found the Constitution an obstacle in the road toward industrial freedom and equality of oppor-

⁹ Phillips, *The Life of Robert Toombs*, p. 49.

¹⁰ Hadley, *The Independent*, April 16, 1908.

tunity; it has handicapped the workers in their progress toward a better legal status.

The Constitution can be amended only with extreme difficulty;¹¹ and it has been continued by stretching the meaning of words to fit new conditions through the instrumentality of the police power. The far-reaching extent of this prerogative of the courts can best be expressed in the language of the Supreme Court of the United States: "It may be said in a general way that the police power extends to all the public needs. It may be put forth in aid of what may be sanctioned by usage, or upheld by the prevailing morality or strong and preponderant opinion to be greatly and immediately necessary to the public welfare."¹² Surely this interpretation by the highest legal authority is broad enough to furnish a satisfactory basis for the support of almost any kind of proposed labor legislation. This dictum of the court also clearly points to the common sense doctrine that a law which was held to be unconstitutional a decade ago may not necessarily be such to-day or to-morrow.

But as the interpretation of the phraseology of the Constitution is given to men who were trained a generation or more ago, and who are members of a profession which is peculiarly precedent shackled,

¹¹ The recent adoption of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Amendments point toward a modification of this statement.

¹² 219 U. S., 104.

even this crude method of stretching the Constitution does not suffice to enable our legal forms to conform to the ever changing social and economic requirements of the present. As long as free land and a frontier were important factors in the nation, the Constitution could be stretched adequately to meet new situations—the old *laissez faire*, individualistic interpretation of liberty and of constitutional rights was not seriously out of step with the course of events. When the frontier disappears and great industry enters, our legal and constitutional edifice is subjected to serious strain. Liberty, the right of contract, the right to do business, and similar indefinite phrases must be interpreted anew in the light of a changed and complicated economic and industrial situation. Yet, until a very recent date, our courts were prone to decide cases relating to the relation of labor to capital in practically the same way that John Marshall did,—and Marshall was a federalist of the ultra-orthodox type. His training and experience offered no opportunity to catch a glimpse of the wage earner's point of view. Too often it has been apparently forgotten that, when aggregated capital faces organized labor, the situation is very different from that which obtained when the isolated employer faced the independent worker. Legal forms have not infrequently concealed and overshadowed common sense and social welfare; the malienable rights of men often seem to have been displaced by the sacred rights of property

and privilege. The transfer of emphasis from property rights to human welfare is always and everywhere attended by many difficulties. In America, moreover, the retarding influence of traditional prejudice against wage workers has been effectively supplemented by legal hindrances. But it must not be forgotten that the courts faced a very difficult problem in attempting to interpret an eighteenth century document in the closing years of the nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth. Furthermore, reformers are, almost without exception, exceedingly impatient.

The early State constitutions also placed property qualifications upon office-holding and upon the right of franchise. The famous and much-lauded Ordinance of 1787 passed by Congress acting under the Articles of Confederation and relating to the North-West Territory, was distinctly undemocratic. To qualify as a voter, a man must possess a freehold of fifty acres, and the territorial governors must each possess one of at least one thousand acres. The poor man was considered to be unworthy of power or privilege.

Alexander Hamilton was undoubtedly the most important personage officially connected with the first two administrations. It was Hamilton who fashioned the framework of our government. In his policy is found the clearest expression of the demands of the dominant elements in the decades immediately following the inauguration of the gov-

ernment under the Constitution. Hamilton's policy looked toward the building up of a strong nation with excellent financial credit. It was the wealth of the nation and the stability of its financial institutions which appealed to him, and toward which he directed the gaze of the awkward young nation. The welfare of the wage earner and his family was only an incidental consideration. Wealth rather than human welfare was the keynote of the political economy of the period. The early use of internal revenue taxation and the prompt employment of troops in the Whiskey Insurrection are indications of the Hamiltonian policy of building up a strong central government regardless of the wishes of the mass of the people.

Thomas Jefferson, who ably directed the forces opposing the federalists, has been called a democrat of democrats; but in reality he was a liberal. Jefferson, although he wrote the Declaration of Independence, had little in common with the wage workers of the period. He was a representative of the middle class,—the farmer living on a medium sized farm and in the upland district of the South. The rural community and the local government were looked upon with favor by Jefferson. Factories, commerce, cities and a wage-earning class were deemed undesirable and considered to be menaces to a republican form of government. "While we have land to labor," said Jefferson, "then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work-

bench or twirling a distaff. Carpenters, masons, smiths are wanting in husbandry; but, for the general operations of manufacture, let our workshops remain in Europe. It is better to carry provisions and materials to workmen there than bring them to the provisions and materials, and with them their manners and principles. The loss by the transportation of commodities across the Atlantic will be made up in the happiness and permanence of government. The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body."¹³

Jeffersonian democracy, placing its emphasis upon *laissez faire* in the industrial world and localism in the political field, did not exhibit interest in the problems confronting the wage earners of that period. Under Jeffersonian democracy, "there still remained a strictly limited electorate, property qualifications, long terms of office, and little participation of the people in the election of their officers."¹⁴ Jefferson's idea of liberty was of the negative type; it simply meant the absence of legal restraint. In the era of Jeffersonian democracy, notwithstanding, strikes and organizations of labor were still illegal. During his presidency the Philadelphia cordwainers were convicted of conspiracy and fined. The passage of the Embargo Act by the Jeffersonian party

¹³ Beard, *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy*, pp. 424-425.

¹⁴ Merriam, *American Political Theories*, p. 175.

also indicated that it was lacking in sympathy not only for the commercial class but also for the wage earners of the nation. This act threw many out of employment and fell heavily upon the workingmen. In England also the wage-earning class was hard hit; but its protests were of no avail in that country.

Nevertheless, the triumph of Jefferson on the threshold of the nineteenth century gave an impetus to democratic ideas. The aristocratic Federalists had disdained to consider the small farmer and the mechanic; but the Jeffersonian democrats, courting the votes of the middle class and of the West and scenting the trend toward manhood suffrage, soon began to emphasize the power and worth of public opinion. "In pamphlets composed for the farmers and mechanics they preached a crusade against the 'money power,' banks, judges appointed by the government, and against all the other aristocratic institutions, the sole existence of which was an insult to the sovereign people."¹⁵ Thus began the familiar catering to the labor vote and the frequent use of platitudes and catch phrases intended to beguile the enfranchised wage earners.

The first real democrat to reach a high political office in the United States was Andrew Jackson, and even he represented the individualistic and negative democracy of the frontier rather than the urban democracy of the wageworker. Jacksonian de-

¹⁵ Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, vol. 2, p. 27.

mocracy was that of small homogeneous communities; it represented the high tide of crude individualism. The political upheaval which placed Andrew Jackson in the presidential chair may be attributed to the same fundamental causes which led to the extension of the suffrage and to the movement for free tax-supported schools. The westward migration and the growth of cities and of the factory system are the basic changes which brought into united activity two somewhat diverse elements,—the wage earners and the western farmers. This unstable political combination augmented by the southern plantation owners elected Jackson and later Van Buren.

During Jackson's administrations the frontiersman dominated at Washington. The experience and the environment of the American pioneer led him to emphasize the desirability of the *laissez faire* policy. The ideals of the frontiersman and those upheld by the industrial wage earners are by no means the same; but Jackson, aided by skillful lieutenants, was able to gain and retain the support of both elements in the population. As long as the ever westward moving frontier line exerted its potent influence, the wage earners' ideal of an industrial democracy involving strong government but a government responsive to the demands of the common people, remained necessarily dim and indistinct. Frontier life tended to produce self-reliance and dislike of governmental restraint. The pioneer scoffed at the in-

signia of aristocracy and was distrustful of all public officials. To be "fresh from the people" was the highest kind of commendation in the eyes of the self-reliant American settler. With the Jacksonian era came the familiar deification of the wisdom and capabilities of "the people,"—a practice which politicians of to-day do not neglect.

The opposing political party soon learned political wisdom. A few years later it presented William Henry Harrison as "the poor man's friend" and used as a slogan, "Tippecanoe and no reduction of wages." Between 1800 and 1840, the wage earners advanced from political nonentity to a position in which the political parties cajoled and placated them, and occasionally threw a few crumbs in their direction. The convention system, however, controlled by intricate party machinery, effectively prevented the mass of people from accomplishing anything of importance,—unless the opportunity of choosing the lesser of two evils is worthy of being called important.

CHAPTER IV

THE FREE SCHOOL AND THE WAGE EARNER

The average American is justly proud of our public school system; the public school is frequently spoken of as the great bulwark of free American institutions. If asked as to the origin of the public school system, he will unhesitatingly speak of Horace Mann, Henry Barnard and the New England ministers as the sole architects of our important educational edifice. Throughout the length and breadth of the land men pay tribute to these great reformers as the founders of the American public school system. But recent investigations, while recognizing the importance of the work of these pioneer educators, have disclosed another and more potent force which has long been concealed from view. This underlying force proceeded from the wage earners, dominated by the bread-and-butter motive and by the desire to improve their social and political status.

The tax-supported school first appeared in America in early colonial New England. It was introduced by the Puritan fathers for purely religious reasons. In early New England, religion and education were inseparably connected; and religion and

politics were also very closely interwoven. The most influential class in early New England was composed of the ministers, and one of the cardinal religious precepts of the period inculcated the idea that each and every individual member of the congregation should be able to read and to interpret the Scriptures. This idea registered a reaction from the Roman Catholic point of view. Since the early New England settlers came across the Atlantic in congregations and lived in town communities, crude individualism was tempered somewhat by community or congregation responsibility. As a consequence, it became one of the prime duties of a town or of a congregation to insist that all members of the community be able to read, and, if necessary, to provide through taxation for the requisite instruction. The tax-supported schools of early New England were the products of middle class influence. These schools did not appear because of an insistent popular demand and they decayed as the religious ardor of the New England pioneer cooled.

As the population increased and scattered over a wider territory, as new and less Puritanical classes of people appeared in New England, a new social condition arose. The solidarity so apparent in the early town became less noticeable, and the power of the religious leader waned. With the religious declension came also an educational decline. The Revolution, the years of agitation preceding it, and the long period of readjustment subsequent to the war,

together with the growing heterogeneity of population, continued the movement until the free school system was practically only a historical fact. In Rhode Island, a unique New England colony, in which the Puritan theocracy never obtained a foothold, the tax-supported public school did not appear until the second quarter of the nineteenth century. At the end of the eighteenth century little remained, even in Massachusetts, of the early school system except an inherited belief in the religious and civic value of education.

The modern free tax-supported school originated in the eventful period, 1820-1850. The famous embargo act of Jefferson's administration and the war of 1812 artificially forced the rapid development of American manufacture. At the conclusion of the struggle there was a panic and an industrial depression. Long continued hard times adversely affected the wage earners in our then truly infant industries. With the return of business activity, towns, cities and factories were enlarged and multiplied. Men, women and children who had been accustomed to life in the open country were now gathered into the new mill towns of New England. Hitherto unknown evils, such as child labor in factories and juvenile delinquency, began to make their unexpected appearance among the social problems of the new nation.

The modern wage earner then appeared for the first time on the American political and social hori-

zon. Massed together in growing cities and towns, opportunities were not lacking for organization and agitation. The long and spectacular struggle between the conservatives of the Atlantic coast region and the turbulent and individualistic frontiersmen of the uplands and the backwoods had finally forced the abolition in most of the Northern States of the old religious and property qualifications for the exercise of the suffrage. As is indicated in a later chapter, at a propitious time the democratic frontiersman placed the ballot in the hands of the newly created class of factory and town wage earners; and the workingmen's ballots gave the nation its free school system.

The concept of universal and free education as a powerful economic and social engine did not arise to a prominent place in the social consciousness until the wage earner became an important factor in political life. A demand for free, tax-supported, public schools appears when and where the workingmen have the ballot. In the period, 1820-1850, the principle of the free school system was firmly established in the northern portion of the United States. Education was permanently transferred from a charity or rate foundation to a tax-supported basis, and it was completely severed from religious control.

New and unusual social and industrial conditions ever breed evils, apparent and real, and foster discontent and unrest. In the cities and the factory

towns of this period the workers felt that the times were awry; and with the childlike faith of Utopia builders they looked hopefully for a panacea for the ills they suffered. Wherever the New England man went he was an enthusiast for education; he said that education would benefit the workers. "Equality among men results only from education"; "the educated man is a good citizen, the uneducated an undesirable member of the body politic." These were some of the oft-repeated phrases which came from many sources to the anxious and hopeful wage earners. Then at the very moment when organized labor was preparing for its first struggle on a large scale for justice and for a higher standard of living, the most uncompromising of all American educational enthusiasts thrust himself before the eager, anxious and discontented workers with this oft-repeated slogan: "I believe in a National System of Equal, Republican, Protective, Practical Education, the sole regenerator of a profligate age and the only redeemer of our suffering country from the equal curses of chilling poverty and corrupting riches, of gnawing want and destroying debauchery, of blind ignorance and of unprincipled intrigue. By this, my creed, I will live. By my consistency with this, my professed belief, I claim to be judged. By it I will stand or fall." Thus did Robert Dale Owen, animated by the faith of his father—Robert Owen, the English philanthropist and Utopian socialist—sound a cry which was

echoed and reëchoed in the many mass meetings of workingmen in the eventful years of the twenties and thirties of the last century.¹

Suddenly, almost without warning, the anxious, disturbed mass of toiling humanity was touched by the almost monotonous repetition of the idea that education is essential for equality and for good citizenship. Free, equal, practical, republican education became the shibboleth of the workers. From 1828 to 1832 or 1833, workingmen's meetings from Albany and Boston on the north to Wilmington and Charleston on the south, took up the cry. Indeed, the American people have been prone to adopt watchwords and shibboleths. Many Americans have enthusiastically rallied around the banners of manhood suffrage, equal suffrage, free homesteads, free silver, the single tax and socialism, implicitly believing that the panacea for all social ills had at last been discovered in one of these reforms. But the greatest of all these slogans has been: Free education for all children. More Americans have marched under the resplendent banner of the free school than have followed the leaders who raised standards on which were inscribed free homesteads or free silver.

In order to present clearly and definitely the attitude of the wage earners of this period toward free schools, a few typical resolutions and declara-

¹ Carlton, "Robert Owen—Educator." *The School Review*, 1910, vol. 17, pp. 186-191.

tions from various cities will be selected from the mass of such material. At a meeting of workingmen held in New York City in November, 1829, resolutions were adopted which read in part as follows: "Resolved, that the most grievous species of inequality is that produced by inequality in education, and that a national system of education and guardianship which shall furnish to all children of the land, equal food, clothing and instruction at public expense is the only effectual remedy for this and for almost every other species of injustice. Resolved, that all other modes of reform are, compared to this, particular, inefficient and trifling." A workingmen's meeting in Philadelphia on September 26, 1829, adopted a preamble which contained the following clause: "No system of education, which a freeman can accept, has yet been established for the poor; whilst thousands of dollars of the public money have been appropriated for building colleges and academies for the rich."

At New Castle, Delaware, in 1830, an Association of Workingmen was formed. In the preamble of their constitution appeared this sentiment: "Let us unite at the polls and give our votes to no candidate who is not pledged to support a rational system of education to be paid for out of the public funds, and to further a rightful protection to the laborer." A meeting of "Workingmen, Mechanics, and others friendly to their interests," held in Boston in 1830, resolved "that the establishment of a

liberal system of education, attainable by all, should be among the first efforts of every lawgiver who desires the continuance of our national independence." In 1831, in the first number of a labor paper published in Indianapolis, the editor declared: "But what shall claim our particular attention will be a system of Public, Republican, Scientific, Practical Education for the Poor as well as for the Rich, looking to the Treasury of the Nation for a part of the surplus revenue to carry it into effect."

The workingmen of the nation early understood that the benefits of a public school system were great; and their influence was an important factor in hastening the development of the system. A careful study of the early growth of the free school system in various States—Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio—and the absence of a free school system in the slaveholding South, confirm the statement that we are in no small measure indebted to the wage earner for our public school system.² Before 1850, the cities and the workingmen, aided by a devoted group of humanitarian leaders among whom were Horace Mann and Robert Dale Owen, were potent forces favoring free public schools. On the other hand, the rural districts, the men of wealth and the employers were rarely friendly to this im-

² Carlton, *Economic Influences upon Educational Progress, in the United States, 1820-1850*. Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, 1908.

portant American institution. The organized workers of 1828 to 1836 dreamed that the general establishment of free public schools would quickly and surely evolve a social Utopia.

By 1850, the free school system was firmly established in the northern portion of the United States. For the next quarter of a century, the slavery agitation, the Civil War and the Reconstruction absorbed the attention of all. The Civil War marks the opening of an important epoch in the history of education in the United States as well as in American industrial history. The educational functions of the home and of the shop were reduced; and a demand appeared that the functions of the school be enlarged so as to include industrial or vocational training, and that the school become a factor in developing the industrial capabilities of the youth. Later, with the opening of the twentieth century, came a host of new educational projects,—the use of the schools as social centers, playgrounds, vacation schools, vocational instruction in continuation schools, medical inspection in the schools, feeding school children, and so on through a long list.*

The early platforms of the American Federation of Labor contained a demand for compulsory education. In recent years, the Federation has favored university extension work in order that the benefits of higher education or special training may be brought to men and women in all walks of life.

* Carlton, *Education and Industrial Evolution*, c. 14.

The methods employed by the University of Wisconsin were especially recommended.⁴ The three representatives of labor on the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations recommended the establishment of day vocational schools, compulsory continuation schools and night vocational schools.⁵ At the present time, the interest of organized labor in the field of education is directed chiefly toward two matters: (1) The scope and administration of vocational education; and (2) the right of the teachers to organize.

Too many employers to-day are urging a narrow practical standard of education for the great mass of children. This influential group apparently desires workers with a restricted outlook upon the world and its problems; workers are demanded who will easily and patiently fit into the highly specialized industry of the present. A systematic effort is being made to convert the public schools, or at least certain departments of the educational system, into schools for apprentices. Organized labor, on the other hand, is insisting upon a broader concept of education for the masses. It is demanding that the school shall not be used to break down the power of labor organizations, and that our educational system shall aim to develop thinking, rather

⁴See *Report of Proceedings of Annual Convention, 1913.*

⁵*Report, 1915, p. 269.*

than automatic, workers, and, lastly, that the school shall train for citizenship.

The practical ideal of many short-sighted employers would make the school a mere trade school; the social ideal upheld by the leaders of organized labor and by many educators demands that the school become an engine for improving human beings, for developing men and women who will be more than cogs in our great industrial mechanism. The former calls for a standardized product; the latter insists upon an individualized output. The adherents of the practical ideal are insistent in urging the claims of a "business administration." Now, the chief merits of a business administration in a factory, a store or a school is found in a reduction of the expenses of production; and this result is normally accomplished by standardizing methods, processes and output. According to both educators and organized labor, the fundamental question in regard to this matter is: Can the United States properly conserve and develop its human resources without insisting that our schools send out into the world an individualized product? And to this question, labor returns a negative answer.

The struggle which is now going on for the control of the American educational system is a very significant one. If education becomes a factory industry, if economy, system and the immediate needs of industry become the leading educational ideals, then will the public school system lose much

of its value as a democratizing element in our civilization. If, on the other hand, the school develops into a studio, citizenship and racial efficiency rather than technical skill, will become watchwords. Our educational system may then become a potent instrumentality in the hands of an alert democracy to break down social and economic inequality, and education may attain its true position as the servant of sociology—the science of social progress. Organized labor has reason to oppose bitterly the commercialization of education; and recent events indicate that it is awake to the importance of the problems connected with the vocational training of the youth.⁶ The demand for vocational education and for vocational guidance is coming in part from the wage earners themselves; but they are insisting in no uncertain manner that it shall not be controlled and guided by any one group or class in the community.

Organized labor is bitterly opposed to the dual system of control. Under that system, the vocation and continuation schools are placed under a separate board quite distinct from the board which directs the remainder of the public school system. Recently the American Federation of Labor has given expression to its position in very definite language. "Perhaps the most vicious element threat-

⁶ See Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, pp. 460-462; Carlton, *The Industrial Situation*, c. 4.

ening to divert the movement of industrial education in our public schools from our American ideals of democracy in education is the continuous effort made by the commercial interests to place industrial education under the direction of a distinctive board of management, separate from the board of administration governing the general education of the children. A division and separation of authority in educational studies, we believe, establishes a division of educational systems in the minds of the school children and their parents, wherein industrial education, instead of proving supplementary to our general education, will be looked upon as the main and most important public system of education. Vocational school courses should at all times be under the guidance and control of school authorities having control of the general education of the children. The unit system of administration is best adapted to educating our children properly for their future guidance as citizens and as workers." ⁷ And one year later the same body laid emphasis "upon the urgent need for labor representation on city school boards, state boards of education, and last, but not least, on the governing boards of our state-owned universities." ⁸

One of the most recent and most significant steps

⁷*Report of Proceedings of the Convention, 1915, p. 323.*

⁸*Report of Proceedings of the Convention, 1916, p. 349. See also Report of Proceedings of the Convention, 1917, p. 414.*

in educational progress is to be found in the demand which is voiced by certain teachers in our larger cities for democracy in the administration of educational affairs. The teacher is a wage earner; but until recent years no effective efforts have been made to weld teachers into organizations resembling trade unions. Of course, one reason for this somewhat anomalous situation has been the preponderance of women in the occupation; and another is the nature of the work. Opposition to the organization of teachers into associations of the trade union type has, as might be expected, promptly made its appearance notably in Cleveland, New York and Chicago. Nevertheless, in May, 1916, the American Federation issued a national charter to the American Federation of Teachers. According to Mr. Gompers, "organization of teachers is encouraging not only because of its influence upon the democracy of the country but for the dynamic influence it will have upon education and the spirit of the public schools." * Since the teachers are public employees, the dispute over the organization of school teachers is a phase of the broader question concerning the right of public employees to form unions and to use the weapons of labor organizations. The recently organized American Association of University Professors has some of the earmarks of a labor organization.

In the not distant future, however, public school

* *American Federationist*, June, 1916, p. 478.

teachers as an organized body of wage earners may be expected to protest, and to protest vigorously and effectively, against too great emphasis upon red tape and autocratic methods in the administration of the public school system. They are beginning to demand that they be given some voice in the determination of the methods to be used, in the choice of the tests of efficiency to be applied to the teachers, and in the appointment of various administrative officials of the school system. In the words of one of the advocates of democracy in school administration: "If we must have the overman whose business it should be to express opinions, let him be exalted by the act of his fellows, provided he will return to the ranks when his term of office is finished, and become as one of them." This is a radical, but not an unreasonable, demand. It, however, asks for a reversal of recent tendencies in school administration; and it is distinctly a working class demand.

The wage earners of the nation have made no mistake in emphasizing the importance of universal education. Education and true democracy must go hand in hand. But educational facilities alone are insufficient. The long working day, over-driving, sweating in all its varied forms, and gainful child labor make it impossible for wage earners as a class to take advantage in any efficient manner of educational facilities. Democracy in its true form must rest upon the foundations of a short working day,

sanitary home and working environment, and the limitation of child labor. Educational facilities plus opportunities for all to utilize such facilities are essential to progress toward democracy and toward the uplift of the masses.

CHAPTER VI

LAND REFORM AND THE WAGE EARNER

From the earliest colonial times, large land grants were made to favored individuals. Since that time many large and valuable holdings of farm lands, timber lands, coal lands, mineral lands and water rights have been acquired by individuals and corporations at a low price or by gift from the government, in various ways ranging from fair purchase to fraud and bribery. The most valuable portion of the great mass of America's colossal area of public lands passed originally by means of land grants or fair or fraudulent purchase into the hands of a comparatively small number of individuals and corporations.¹

In colonial days, land grants were made primarily for the purpose of stimulating settlement or to reward royal favorites. Many of the promoters of the colonial period were great land speculators. Just before the opening of the War for Independence, England became aware of the possibilities of

¹ For unsympathetic accounts of our public land policy see Myers, *History of Great American Fortunes*, vol. 2, c. 1; Henry George, *Our Land and Land Policy*. See also Howe, *The High Cost of Living*, c. 18.

selling land for revenue purposes; and several of the colonies also adopted the policy of selling public lands at auction. State lands were likewise disposed of in 1784-85.² As a consequence, the wage earners of the colonial period were denied access to much of the best land. Particularly in the proprietary colonies was it difficult for the poorer classes to obtain land. The land laws of colonial times and of the first decades after the Revolution were unfavorable to the workingmen. "Laborers were absolutely prevented from acquiring public lands; whilst hundreds of thousands of acres in separate lots became the property of capitalists and corporations who either kept them for themselves, or else resold them with great profits to the colonists."³ A few decades later in the West our land policy did not in practice favor actual settlers. "The Act of March 3, 1853, admitted California lands to preëmption, with all its opportunities for fraud and land grabbing, from which California suffered along with other parts of the West."⁴

In Virginia, "as early as 1636 there was at least one estate of ten thousand acres; after 1650 grants of ten and even of twenty thousand acres were not uncommon."⁵ At the time of his death, George

² Ford, *Colonial Precedents of Our National Land System as it Existed in 1800*, pp. 85-89.

³ Rabbeno, *American Commercial Policy*, p. 177.

⁴ Young, *The Single Tax Movement in the United States*, p. 34. See also Hill, *The Public Domain and Democracy*, p. 46; Donaldson, *The Public Domain*, p. 220.

⁵ Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 525.

Washington probably owned over 70,000 acres of land. The Byrd estate in Virginia contained in the eighteenth century about 180,000 acres. The best land in colonial New York was parceled out among a small group of large landowners called patroons. "The expectation probably was that great landed estates would come into being which would be cultivated by tenants, who would be assisted in their labors by slaves, the profitable fur trade with the natives being retained by the company and by those residing within the company's reservation at Manhattan." ⁶ Consequently, the most valuable lands around New York and on the Hudson were soon controlled by a few owners. Even in New England, a few men obtained the ownership of vast areas of land. General Knox of Revolutionary fame, for example, became in 1792 the owner of a large estate in Maine comprising the present counties of Waldo and Knox.⁷ One of the younger states, California, presents to-day conditions in regard to land ownership not unlike that in the East in the eighteenth century. "One firm owns nearly one million acres; one railway owns 500,000 acres. In Kern County four companies own over 1,000,000 acres, or more than half the land in private ownership. The Kern County Land Company alone owns 356,000 acres. In Merced County, Miller and Lux own 245,000

⁶ Channing, *History of the United States*, vol. 1, p. 448.

⁷ Ford, *Colonial Precedents of Our National Land System*, pp. 135-139.

acres. The evils of such ownership are every year becoming more apparent.”⁸ The evils connected with land speculation and the ownership of large tracts of land in California furnished the economic background for Henry George’s famous book, *Progress and Poverty*.⁹

After the separation from England and after the various states had ceded their western lands to the central government, the method of disposing of the public lands west of the Alleghany mountains became a matter calling for Congressional action. The national policy adopted by the federal government made the disposal of the public lands a source of revenue. This policy was adhered to rigidly until about 1840 and nominally until the Homestead Act was passed in 1862. The act of 1785, passed by Congress acting under the Articles of Confederation, was the basis for future land legislation. It applied to certain lands located north of the Ohio river. The land was to be surveyed into townships. Every alternate township was to be disposed of as a whole. The remainder was to be divided into sections of 640 acres; but no tract of less than 640 acres was to be sold. The land was to be offered for sale at auction at a price not less than one dollar per acre. The expenses of surveying were to be paid by the purchaser. A settler must under

⁸ *Report of Commission on Land Colonization and Rural Credits of the State of California*, 1916, p. 7.

⁹ First published in 1879.

this law be prepared to pay in cash at least \$640 in order to purchase a farm,—a very considerable sum for the poor man of that period. But the government needed money badly. Presently, the land was sold in large amounts to land companies, “who were ready to supply the treasury with appreciable sums of money.”¹⁰ The Ohio Company obtained, in 1787, at a very low price over four million acres of land. All but one and one-half million acres were turned over to another “company” composed of influential Congressmen and their friends.¹¹

The first act after the Constitution was adopted relating to the public lands was passed in 1796. It provided for sales at public auction at a price not less than two dollars per acre. No sales of less than 640 acres were to be made. The credit system was introduced, and only a small part of the total payment was required at the time of sale. This act was slightly amended in 1800. The acts of 1785, 1796 and 1800 were distinctly favorable to the men with capital. Men of small financial resources had little opportunity to purchase land directly from the government of the United States. The act of 1820 was more favorable to the man possessing little capital. The minimum price of land was fixed at \$1.25 per acre; and the minimum

¹⁰ Schafer, *The Origin of the System of Land Grants for Education*, p. 40.

¹¹ West, *American History and Government*, pp. 267-8; Bassett, *A Short History of the United States*, p. 232.

amount to be sold to one purchaser was reduced to eighty acres. The credit system was abolished.

At least four epochs may be discerned in the agitation for land reform in the United States: 1. Before 1840. Land sales were made for the purpose of increasing the revenue of the government. The opposition to this policy on the part of the workmen began about 1829. 2. 1840-1862. The agitation of the workingmen aided by humanitarian leaders, and, finally, by the employers of the East, forced the adoption of the Homestead Act. 3. 1866-1872. Opposition to land grants to railways. 4. 1879- Single-tax agitation.

During the early portion of the nineteenth century the eastern portion of the country favored a high minimum price for public land because it tended to check the migration of wage earners from the East to the West, and thus helped to keep wages at a low level. The land speculator advocated the sale of land in large tracts. Sales at a high minimum price and in large tracts also gave the government the maximum amount of revenue from the public domain. The poor, would-be pioneer and those who desired to see orderly settlement demanded low prices for public land and the sale of small sections. The protective tariff policy of the early period of our national history was bound up with a land policy which united both agricultural and manufacturing interests. On the one hand, it

excluded laborers from the soil; and, on the other hand, it left the field open for large scale speculation in agricultural land.¹² Later the South came to oppose a liberal land policy because such a policy tended to prevent the extension of slave territory. Almost as soon as labor organizations began to be formed, the wage earners started to agitate against the land policy of the government; and they were important factors in forcing the passage of the Homestead Act,—the most important piece of national legislation in regard to the disposal of the public domain.

At a mass meeting held on April 29, 1829, at which was taken the first step in the organization of the Workingmen's Party of New York City, resolutions were adopted, among others, condemning the private ownership of land and the hereditary transmission of property. The adoption of these resolutions was doubtless due to the influence of a mechanic named Thomas Skidmore. The famous labor paper of the time, *The Working Man's Advocate*, appeared soon after. In the first number the following motto appeared immediately below the title. "All children are entitled to equal education; all adults, to equal property; and all mankind to equal privileges." Soon after Skidmore's influence diminished; and the motto was changed. The demand for equality of property

¹² Rabbeno, *American Commercial Policy*, p. 177.

was omitted.¹³ Thomas Skidmore was probably the first American agrarian.¹⁴ His book, *Rights of Man to Property*, issued in 1829, is worthy of notice because it was written by an American workingman. He formed no communities; and he was not, like Robert Owen, the founder of the New Harmony Community in Indiana, and other exponents of Utopian socialism, a member of the middle class.

At the time when Robert Dale Owen, the son of Robert Owen, and many other enthusiastic reformers were vociferously proclaiming that free and universal education was the unfailing cure for all social ills, Skidmore in his much neglected book declared that equal division of property was the first and most essential step. He urged the abolition of inheritance and the prohibition of gifts of large amounts of property. The property of the deceased during a given year was to be divided among those coming of age during the same year. Children from birth to maturity were to receive a sufficient amount from the state to provide "full and decent maintenance, according to age and condition." The education of the young was to be provided for at public expense. Inequality in social and economic conditions rendered, he said, "public schools in a measure abortive." In the writ-

¹³ Carlton, *Political Science Quarterly*, 1907, vol. 22, pp. 402-404.

¹⁴ Perhaps Thomas Paine should be designated the first American agrarian.

ings of this radical workingman are foreshadowed many problems which are to-day of vital importance, such as the taxation of inheritances, feeding school children, paying children to attend school, and workingmen's compensation. "Feed first the hungry; clothe first the naked, or ill-clad; provide comfortable homes for all; by hewing down colossal estates among us and equalizing all property; take care that the animal wants be supplied first; that even the apprehension of want be banished; and then you will have a good field and good subjects for education. Then will instruction be conveyed without obstacle; for the wants, the unsatisfied wants, of the body will not interfere with it." Such was the philosophy of this American workingman in the third decade of the nineteenth century.

George H. Evans was the editor of *The Working Man's Advocate*. He doubtless saw that a scheme for an equal distribution of land would mean a frontal attack upon vested rights, and lead in turn to violent opposition to the new workingmen's party. "But there was an immense area still belonging to the people and not yet divided. This was the public domain. There man's equal right to land could be asserted. He sent marked copies of his paper to Andrew Jackson in 1832, before Jackson's message on the sale of public lands."¹⁸ The workingmen's party soon disappeared. But

¹⁸ Commons, *Political Science Quarterly*, 1909, vol. 24, p. 478.

the rising prices of the thirties produced an extraordinary development of unionism which in turn vanished amid the chaos following the panic of 1837. "The workingmen were bottled up in the cities. Land speculation kept them from taking up vacant land near by or in the West. If they could only get away and take up land, then they would not need to strike. Labor would become scarce. Employers would advance wages and landlords would reduce rents. Not for the sake of those who moved West did Evans advocate freedom of the public lands, but for the sake of those who remained East."¹⁶ In short, he advocated a liberal land policy for the sake of the wage earners of the East. The National Trades Assembly, representing organized labor from many towns and cities, in 1834 opposed the sale of public lands. "In 1833, a memorial of a 'Portion of the Laboring Classes' of New York City demanded that, among other measures, a settled policy should be put in force that the whole of the remaining public lands should forever continue to be the public property of the nation."¹⁷

In the workingmen's movement of the twenties and thirties, land reform had been only one of the minor reforms demanded. The great panacea had been free, equal, republican education. But the

¹⁶ Commons, *Political Science Quarterly*, 1909, vol. 24, pp. 478-479.

¹⁷ Myers, *History of the Supreme Court*, p. 385. See *Executive Documents*, First Session, 23rd Congress, 1834, Document No. 104.

panic of 1837 and the depression of the immediately succeeding years convinced many that the ballot and the school were insufficient to guarantee democracy and human equality and to convert the American republic into an earthly Utopia. The old cure-alls had failed to stand satisfactorily the test of experience; and the way was cleared for the propaganda of a new antidote for social ills. The forties and fifties brought forth the land reformer. This enthusiast emphatically declared that individual and inalienable ownership of equal farms would usher in a new and a better era in which inequality, injustice and oppression would vanish. Living upon an inalienable homestead, and this alone, it was urged, would give "freedom to a man's vote."

The land reformer of the forties had a very different ideal from the one so earnestly presented by Skidmore. Individualism, not communism; *laissez faire*, not governmental interference; private and inalienable ownership of land, not land nationalization,—these were some of the distinctive differences between the two classes of reformers. Communism had been sloughed off; the crude individualism of the frontiersman stood plainly revealed. In 1844, Evans, who had worked with Robert Dale Owen and Miss Frances Wright in the workingman's agitation of 1829-1831 for free tax-supported public schools, heard a new call to action. A choice band of ardent enthusiasts met Evans in the printery of

John Windt; and another ambitious plan to regenerate mankind was devised. The movement spread. Humanitarians, workingmen, and even the growing capitalist class finally united in demanding land reform. *The Working Man's Advocate*, later called *Young America*, was again published; but its fundamental demand was now for land reform. Evans "and his friends organized a party known as National Reformers, and asked candidates of all other parties to sign a pledge to vote for a homestead law. If no candidate signed, they placed their own ticket in the field."¹⁸ Many mass meetings were held. The chief object of the new party "is the stoppage of the sale of the Public Lands, and the establishment instead of the principle of allowing every landless man to take a quarter section (160 acres) or a village lot of the Public Lands, and occupy it so long as he possesses no other land."¹⁹ The National Reform Union of New York City was organized in 1844. Soon after its organization, it issued a Report in regard to land monopoly. "Having made due inquiry into the facts, the Committee are satisfied that there is a much larger number of laboring people congregated in the seaboard towns, than can find constant and profitable employment. Your Committee do not think it necessary

¹⁸ Commons, "Horace Greeley and the Working Class Origins of the Republican Party," *Political Science Quarterly*, 1909, vol. 24, p. 480.

¹⁹ Editorial in *New York Tribune*, October 13, 1845.

to enter into statistical details in order to prove a fact not disputed by anybody. The result of this over-supply of labor is Competition among the laborers tending to reduce wages, even where employment is obtained, to a scale greatly below what is necessary for the comfortable subsistence of the workingman, and the education of his family. It appears to your Committee, that as long as the supply of labor exceeds the demand, the natural laws which regulate prices will render it very difficult, if not altogether impossible, permanently to improve the conditions of the working people." ²⁰ Therefore, they demanded that the public lands be allotted in small parcels to actual settlers. This body of reformers wished to restore man to his "natural right to land." One of the planks in the platform of the Industrial Congress related to land reform. The Industrial Congress was supposed to represent all classes. Three congresses were held in 1845, 1847 and 1850.

Young America issued a pamphlet entitled, "Vote Yourself a Farm." This was widely circulated. It read in part as follows: "Would you free your country, and the sons of toil everywhere, from the heartless, irresponsible mastery of the Aristocracy of Avarice? Would you disarm this aristocracy of its chief weapon, the fearful power of banish-

²⁰ *The Working Man's Advocate*, July 6, 1844. Reprinted in *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 7, pp. 293 ff.

ment from God's earth? Then join with your neighbors to form a true *American Party*, having for its guidance the principles of the American Revolution, and whose chief measures shall be: 1. To limit the quantity of land that any man may henceforth monopolize or inherit; and 2, to make the Public Lands free to actual settlers only, each having the right to sell his improvements to any man not possessed of other land. These great measures once carried out, wealth would become a changed social element; it would then consist of the accumulated products of human labor instead of a hoggish monopoly of the products of God's labor; and the antagonism of labor and capital would cease."

Before the Civil War, investors who were anxious to speculate found only a comparatively small number of opportunities. Consequently, land speculation was not uncommon. The land reformers were bitterly opposed to this form of speculation. Mr. L. A. Hine, the editor of a radical paper published in Cincinnati, voiced the sentiment of the ardent land reformers. "No one ever became wealthy by the fair reward of his own labor. But the rich have made more money out of the land which nature designed to be as free as air than has been made in any and all speculation put together. They buy land at an early stage of settlement of the country, keep it until the price has ad-

vanced so as to satisfy their cupidity, and then sell it, counting perhaps an hundred-fold profit." ²¹

Lewis Masquerier wrote a book which presents the views of one of the radical land reformers. The title of this little volume, as was frequently true of books written a generation or two ago, is a synopsis of the succeeding pages,—“Sociology or the Reconstruction of Society, Government and Property upon the Principles of Equality, the Perpetuity and the Individuality of the Private Ownership of Life, Person and Government, Homestead and the whole Product of Labor, by organizing all nations into townships of self-governed homestead Democracies, self-employed in farming and mechanism, giving all the Liberty and Happiness to be found on earth.” The rights in regard to land ownership which Evans, Masquerier and others emphasized were: (1) equality in the quantity of land owned by individuals or families; (2) land should be inalienable, or the ownership should be perpetual; and (3) land should be owned by individuals, not owned collectively. These views were in harmony with the ideas of the National Reformers and the members of the Industrial Congresses of this period.

It is interesting to note that in 1878 the Workmen's party of California adopted a plank which bears a marked resemblance to the demand of the earlier land reformers of the East. It was asserted: (1) That the granting of public lands to

²¹ *Herald of Truth*, 1847, vol. I, p. 110.

corporations was robbery; (2) that all lands so held should revert to actual settlers; (3) that individuals should not be allowed to hold more than one square mile of land each; and (4) that lands should be taxed according to value irrespective of improvements.²²

To the enthusiastic land reformer, land alienation portended inequalities and social injustice. It was urged that the soil, like a man's body, should never have a price set upon it. Land must only be exchanged for land; and products only for products. "All institutions of society and government are really founded upon the evil principle of alienation and monopoly of property and other rights." Greeley, in "Hints toward Reform," also pointed out the evils of land monopoly and demanded "land limitation." "A single law of Congress, proffering to each landless citizen a patch of the Public Domain,—small, but sufficient, when faithfully cultivated, for the sustenance of his family,—and forbidding farther sales of the Public Lands, except in limited quantities to actual settlers, with a suitable proviso against future aggregation, would promote immensely the independence, enlightenment, morality, industry, and comfort of our entire laboring population evermore." Again in his "Essay on Emancipation of Labor," Greeley declared: "I trace the lack of employment, the scanty

²² Eaves, *A History of California Labor Legislation*, p. 35.

reward, and the meager subsistence often accorded to Labor, directly to the resistless influence of Land Monopoly." And a Southern writer has declared that Horace Greeley "was the first man in America to demonstrate that land monopoly occasioned the enslavement of the laboring classes, and that as the population became denser, this slavery became infinitely worse than domestic slavery."

"In order that the rights of all might be equal the right of each must be limited. For the older states it was proposed that land limitation should take effect only on the death of the owner, Land was not to be inherited in larger quantities than 160 or 320 acres. Wisconsin was the only state in which this measure got as far as a vote in the legislature, that of 1851, where it was carried in the lower house by a majority of two votes but was defeated on a final vote." ²⁸

Masquerier drew up a cosmopolitan "model constitution." This was an "attempt to declare the thorough principles of Social and Political Science; a new form of Society and Government, and adapted to any state or nation." It was proposed that the land be divided into townships composed of farms of not less than ten acres in extent. Each family was to be the inalienable owner of one of these farms. The nation was to be divided into townships. Each township was to be six miles square

²⁸ Commons, *Political Science Quarterly*, 1909, vol. 24, p. 482.

with a square mile in the center for a park and for public edifices.

This unique scheme was the framework of an individualistic, democratic Utopia. It inclined toward anarchism rather than toward communism; it was reactionary in that it looked toward a primitive type of agricultural society. Masquerier pictured a Utopia which truly looked backwards. Agriculture and manufacture of a crude type were to be followed. The *laissez faire* system was to prevail as far as possible; and the function of the central government was to be reduced to a minimum. Commerce, cities, coöperative action, and representative government were spurned as exemplifying monopoly and civic decay. The ideal of the radical land reformer of the pre-Civil War period clearly has the unique imprint of the American primitive, isolated-farmhouse type of association. Masquerier glorified a type of civilization which melts before the railway, the factory and modern trade. The land reformer agreed with Rousseau in opposing commerce and manufacture, with Jefferson in glorifying a rural democracy and in fearing the development of cities, and with the Greeks in demanding direct participation in government by all citizens; the concepts of modern sociology were outside his limited range of vision.

An individualistic Utopia of farmhouses was indigenous to a country peopled with a race of highly individualistic men and women, and possessed of

an abundance of uncultivated, but cultivatable, land. The communistic schemes of Owen and Fourier were of European origin. The Utopia of Masquerier and Greeley was necessarily that of a frontier community living upon the soil in an independent fashion. The simple life of the American pioneer became the ideal life for society everywhere and at any time.

Although the ideal of the land reformer was very different from that of the wage earner, both were able to work together toward a common end. The land reformers blazed the way toward the Homestead Act. As has been indicated, the workingmen of the cities early looked with favor upon free land for homesteads. Greeley pointed out two ways in which the city laborer would benefit: (1) Some competitors would be drawn to the new lands, thus tending to raise wages, or at least to prevent lowering the existing rate of wages. (2) There would be an increasing demand for the products of manufacturing and workshops, thus increasing the demand for labor.

Employers of labor were favorably impressed by the latter effect, but not so by the former. Their attitude was chiefly determined by the relative importance of the two. After the potato famine in Ireland and the revolutionary disturbances of 1848, the rapid influx of immigrants afforded a supply of labor to take the places of native workers who might be attracted to the West by free homesteads. The

gradual development of the factory system and the expansion of the railway network showed clearly the need of wide markets on the one hand, and the possibility of economically reaching distant markets on the other. To carve farms out of the virgin western wilderness and to put these farms in close touch with the East by means of the railway meant the creation of a demand for the products of mine and factory. The shifting of the economic center of gravity and the influx of immigrants caused many of the manufacturers to change their attitude and to align themselves with the land reformers and the workingmen in demanding the rapid extension of the small farm system with individual ownership.²⁴

The following extract from an editorial which appeared in an influential New York newspaper constitutes a powerful and tangible appeal to the manufacturing, commercial and wage-earning interests of the East in favor of homesteads and the nonextension of slavery. "The Great West is the predestined market, not only of the imported Wares and Fabrics of the seaboard cities, but of the Iron of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the Manufactures of New England, the cotton and sugar of the Southwest. The faster the West can be settled and cultivated, the more independent and thrifty its settlers, the greater must be the demand for the pe-

²⁴ Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, pp. 48-49.

culiar products and merchandize of the seaboard States. A new State in the West implies new warehouses in and near lower Broadway, new streets and blocks uptown, new furnaces in Pennsylvania, new factories in New England. A new cabin on the prairies predicts and insures more work for carmen and stevedores of New York."²⁵ Carl Schurz in a speech delivered August 1, 1860, pointed out clearly and forcefully the divergent interests of free labor and slavery in regard to the public lands.²⁶

Workingmen favored land reform during the forties and fifties as a means of keeping up wages. If wages were low, a worker could go West and take possession of a portion of the public domain. But the South with its plantation system and its slave economy stood as a mighty obstacle. The Republican party was a concrete result of the insistent demand for free homesteads.²⁷ The platform of that party in 1860 contained a plank favoring "the free homestead policy." It read as follows: "Resolved, That we protest against any sale or alienation to others of the public lands held by actual settlers, and against any view of the free homestead policy, which regards the settlers as paupers or supplicants for public bounty; and we

²⁵ *New York Tribune*, August 25, 1860.

²⁶ *New York Tribune*, August 29, 1860.

²⁷ Commons, "Greeley and the Republican Party," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 24, pp. 468-488.

demand the passage by Congress of the complete and satisfactory homestead measure, which has already passed the House." After the Southern Senators and Representatives left the halls of Congress at the opening of the Civil War, the famous Homestead Act became a law. This act partially embodied the demands of the leaders of the land reform movement, — Evans, Greeley, Masquerier and others.

Of the many curious reform movements of the "yeasty" period of the forties and fifties, perhaps none bore better fruit than that for land reform. Although to-day the eccentricities in the schemes of Evans, Greeley and Masquerier can readily be discerned, it may easily be believed that their agitation did much to retard the development of a system of absentee landlordism in the central and western portions of the United States. And the votes of the workingmen were potent factors in the partial consummation of the reforms demanded by the humanitarian leaders.²⁸

After the passage of the Homestead Act, land reform was temporarily dropped from the list of social reforms demanded. Congress, however, granted millions of acres of the public domain to railways; and soon after the close of the Civil War, land reform reappeared in the oft-repeated objection made by wage earners and others to land grants

²⁸ Carlton, "An American Utopia," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1910, vol. 24, pp. 428-433.

to railways. The demand was made time and time again by organized labor that the public domain be disposed of only to actual settlers and in small parcels. The perennial fear of monopoly led the wage earners to insist that land should not be donated or sold to corporations. "It seemed that the hopes of homesteaders were to be dashed by a return to the land speculation and extensive holdings of earlier days. The first strong protest against this reaction took shape in the National Labor Congress of 1866, and the now elderly land reformers of the forties again gathered themselves together to protect their dearly acquired right of individual homestead. Their activity appears throughout the proceedings of the National Labor Union and the Industrial Congress; and the final success of their agitation, in halting the gifts of land to corporations, marks the termination of the homestead stage of agrarianism." ²⁹

At the first meeting, August, 1866, of the National Labor Congress, a resolution was unanimously adopted declaring that the public land ought to be disposed of only to actual settlers. The second Congress held at Chicago in 1867 also passed resolutions bitterly assailing the policy of the government in regard to public lands. "The course of our legislation recently has tended to the building up of greater monopolies, and the creation of more power-

²⁹ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 9, pp. 46-47.

ful moneyed and landed aristocracies in the United States than any that now overshadow the destinies of Europe. Eight hundred millions of acres of the people's lands have been legislated into the hands of a few hundred individuals, who already assume a haughty and insolent tone and bearing towards the people and government, as did the patricians of Ancient Rome. These lands are held unimproved, and mainly for speculative purposes. In that condition they yield neither produce nor revenue, but if they were open to settlement they would soon swarm with a busy population, by whose thrift, industry and intelligence the wilderness would then be made to blossom as the rose." ⁸⁰ It was further resolved, as in 1866, that public lands be given, not sold, only to actual settlers; and that uncultivated lands held for speculative purposes be taxed as heavily as improved land in the same locality. In 1869, the official publication of the National Labor Union, *The Workingman's Advocate*, again demanded the taxing of all uncultivated land.

A call for a convention issued by a committee authorized by the National Labor Congress of 1870 confidently asserted that capital was master in this country. Among the five instrumentalities which gave capital its favorable and dominating position was mentioned land monopoly. This was declared to be the result of the absorption of the public do-

⁸⁰ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 9, p. 189.

main by corporations. The railway corporations were especially aimed at. The remaining instrumentalities were: Banking and moneyed monopolies; consolidated railways and other traction monopolies; manufacturing monopolies which crushed the small operators and determined the wages of the workers; and commercial and grain monopolies which indulge in speculation. After 1871 no more land grants were made to railways.³¹ The discontinuance of this policy was due to a combination of circumstances among which was the peopling of the West and, hence, greater certainty of business for a new railway. Nevertheless, the opposition of the wage earners constituted one important factor in ending the practice.

The land reform doctrine known as the single tax was definitely formulated by Henry George, a man familiar with the conditions in California. His famous book, *Progress and Poverty*, was published in 1879. Some enormous holdings of land in California "had come down from the Spanish and Mexican régime"; others were the result of the land policy of the United States which favored speculators rather than settlers.³² The single tax propagandists propose to take the entire economic rent of land in the form of a tax. No taxes are to be

³¹ Sanborn, *Congressional Grants of Land in Aid of Railways*, *Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin*, p. 66.

³² Young, *History of the Single Tax Movement in the United States*, pp. 33-34. See also Bancroft, *History of California*, vol. 6, p. 577; and Royce, *California*, p. 491.

levied on improvements. In this manner, land rents may be diverted from private pockets to the public treasury. The single tax movement does not seem to have attracted much attention from organized labor. Until recent years this "agrarian doctrine, growing out of Californian conditions, was too advanced to fit other American conditions." The workers outside of California were not yet ready for the doctrine of the single tax.⁸³

In 1886, the socialists and certain labor organizations united with the single taxers to support Henry George for mayor of New York City. For several years preceding this date, groups of workmen had affiliated with various ephemeral labor organizations and with numerous temporary political and reform movements. The support of Henry George for office does not necessarily indicate that the workers of New York were especially interested in the single tax propaganda. The workingmen of the country were dissatisfied; and they recognized in Henry George a friend of the toiling masses.⁸⁴ The editor of *The Nation* was of the opinion that the labor organizations "do not care one cent about Mr. George's promised 'reforms,' which are much too shadowy and remote. What they seek is to

⁸³ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 9, p. 47.

⁸⁴ Young, *The Single Tax Movement in the United States*, pp. 95, 103.

frighten the City and State officers and 'the politicians' in such fashion that strikers will not be fined or imprisoned for boycotting and street rioting; and this they think they can do by giving George a large vote."⁸⁵ On the other hand, the friends of Mr. George believed that the workers had been convinced by the perusal of *Progress and Poverty* that the single tax and political action would solve their difficulties.

In the presidential campaign of 1888 two ephemeral labor parties appeared in the political arena,—the Union Labor party and the United Labor party. The former advocated the limitation of land ownership; and the latter favored the single tax. Both factions denounced bitterly the old parties as hopelessly corrupt; and both favored government ownership of railway and telegraph lines.⁸⁶ In the eighties, more permanent labor organizations were gaining strength. The Knights of Labor reached their high-water mark in 1886,—the year of the Henry George campaign in New York City. In fact, it was a period in which labor was sloughing off its reformism. Labor was entering an epoch in which emphasis was to be placed upon union action rather than upon political activities.

In the last five or ten years has occurred a re-

⁸⁵ *The Nation*, October 7, 1886. See also Dewey, *National Problems*, p. 53.

⁸⁶ See also *infra*, Chapter VIII.

markable revival of single taxism. The renewed interest in this reform appears to be the product of the disappearance of free land for homesteads. Land—desirable land—is nearly all in the hands of private individuals; and the problems connected with the “unearned increment,” with rent and with the conservation of natural resources, are now pressing for solution. In a supplementary statement made by A. B. Garretson, one of the three labor representatives on the Commission on Industrial Relations, and concurred in by the other labor representatives, one of the four fundamental causes underlying unrest in the industrial world in this country was presented as follows: “Land monopoly with resulting prohibitive price, the greatest influence in creating congestion in the cities, bears its own share of the responsibility for unrest.” It was suggested that no more land be held by one individual than can be put to “productive use.” Unused land should revert to the state and be acquirable by persons who would “utilize it.”⁸⁷ This suggestion is very similar to those made by the land reformer of earlier years.

Early in the year 1916, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor indorsed a proposed amendment to the constitution of the State of Oregon providing for the “single tax.”

⁸⁷ *Report of the Commission on Industrial Relations*, 1915 ed., pp. 294-295.

This proposal also provided that "When the State acquires title to a piece of property because of delinquent taxes the title from that time on is vested in the State and it cannot be sold to private individuals. It must be leased."⁸⁸ The vote on this amendment was approximately 43,000 for to 155,000 against; or about 22 per cent. of the total vote was cast for the amendment. Several other labor organizations have also indorsed the principle of the single tax,—the State Federations of Oregon, California, Missouri, Rhode Island and Texas, the Central Labor Union of the District of Columbia and a number of local labor organizations.⁸⁹ A recent investigation of the "political thought of social classes" in Oregon presented, among others, the following conclusion: "The laboring class favors the single-tax more than do the other social classes."⁹⁰ The American Federation of Labor has also taken an active interest in the conservation movement. The Socialist party, with a normal voting strength of perhaps a million drawn almost entirely from the ranks of the wage earners, favors the extension of the public domain so as to include mines, quarries, forests, oil wells and waterpower. In 1909, by a referendum vote, the clause in the platform of the

⁸⁸ *Joseph Fels Fund Bulletin*, April, 1916; December, 1916.

⁸⁹ *Joseph Fels Fund Bulletin*, November, 1916.

⁹⁰ *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 36, p. 316.

Socialist party demanding the collective ownership of "all land," was stricken out.⁴¹

"In 1917, the difficulties connected with the production of an adequate food supply directed, in a very insistent manner, the attention of the American people of all classes to the problem of land reform. The organization in December, 1917, of the American Association for Agricultural Legislation is one of many indications that the land reform question is again to be a favorite topic for the agitator, the investigator and the statesman. The reconstruction program of the American Federation of Labor (1919) demands that "legislation should be enacted placing a graduated tax upon all usable lands above the acreage which is cultivated by the owner."

CHAPTER VI

LABOR LEGISLATION AND THE WAGE EARNER

Labor legislation may be classified as follows:

1. Legislation of a general character, considered desirable by organized labor but not dealing specifically with the wage earners as a class, for example, free schools, free homesteads, the popular election of United States senators, the Australian ballot system, the parcels post; 2. legislation specifically beneficial to the wage earning class such as laws fixing the maximum number of working hours per day, the restriction of immigration, child labor legislation and workingmen's compensation; 3. distinctly union legislation such as modifications in the laws in regard to the injunction, and the exemption of labor organizations from the provisions of the anti-trust laws.¹ Legislation of the first type was the chief concern of the pre-Civil War period. The third class has been vigorously pressed since 1908. Progressives, social reformers or humanitarians have in many cases been the active leaders in agitating for legislation of the first and second type.

¹Wright, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1915, vol. 29, pp. 254-255.

The early agitation for labor legislation in the United States was initiated by humanitarian leaders such as James G. Carter and Horace Mann. These men and their followers declared that education was necessary to good citizenship in a country under a republican form of government, and that leisure time was essential for adequate education. The wage earner who was obliged to work twelve to sixteen hours a day was thereby debarred from obtaining the necessary amount of training requisite for good citizenship. The insistent demand for adequate educational facilities and opportunities led directly to the movement for shorter hours. Labor reformers of the pre-Civil War period usually knit the two together. Although the initial steps were taken by middle class leaders, the wage earners of the country soon took up the demand for a shorter working day, and persistently agitated for it. The traditional insistence upon education for each and every individual, derived from the principles of the Puritans, led directly to the shorter hour movement soon after the factory system became firmly established. But throughout the history of American labor legislation the most potent and persistent pressure for this and other forms of labor legislation has come from those most vitally concerned,—the workers themselves. Excepting the demands for a mechanics' lien law, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, free education and free land, the one kind of labor legislation repeatedly demanded during the

pre-Civil War period was for a reduction in the length of the working day.

But legislation regulating the hours of labor, or the conditions under which men, women and children might be employed, ran counter to the deep-seated American aversion to anything savoring of interference with the freedom of the individual. This furnishes one of the chief reasons why agitation for a shorter working day was continued so long before tangible results were forthcoming. This reverence for what was assumed to be the rights of the individual crops out time and time again. For example, in the first American investigation of working conditions in factories, the selectmen of Massachusetts towns and cities were authorized to investigate only "incorporated manufacturing companies." These were creatures of the state and, hence, interference with their business was not improper. But evidently it was felt that private individuals operating manufacturing establishments ought not to be investigated.² The old negative idea of liberty as existing only in the absence of legal restraint, supported by the prestige of the Declaration of Independence and constantly revived by contact with the western frontier spirit, died hard. The modern positive idea of liberty under law was evolved in an environment of factories, division of labor, cities and wage earners.

² *Report on the Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners*, 1910, vol. 6, p. 31.

Three methods of obtaining shorter working hours were utilized by the wage workers in the agitation of the pre-Civil War period. (a) Between 1827 and 1831, the formation of labor parties and the election of workingmen to office, was relied upon. (b) Especially in the years immediately preceding the panic of 1837, strikes were called for this purpose. (c) In the forties, the petition method was resorted to. State legislatures were petitioned to pass laws granting a shorter working day.³

Until after 1865, labor organizations did not display much interest in the matter of restricting child labor. The reasons for this situation are not obscure. The membership of early American labor organizations was drawn chiefly from the skilled trades, such as the building trades, printing and shoemaking. The factory workers were not organized until later; but the first child wage earners were employed in factories. This fact accounts in part for the apathy of organized labor before the Civil War in regard to child labor. Again, education and land reform were considered to be panaceas for all industrial and social ills. Secure these two fundamental reforms and, it was confidently assumed, the evils connected with industry would vanish. And, lastly, the familiar injunctions against idleness must not be overlooked as factors in delaying legislation against child labor.

³ *Report on the Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners*, 1910, vol. 6, p. 37.

The agitation for a shorter working day began soon after the close of the War of 1812. The workingmen's parties, the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics and other Workingmen, 1831-1834, and the trades' unions organized in the period, 1833-1837, agitated for a ten-hour day. In 1829, many artisans in the city of New York were working only ten hours per day. In the latter half of the twenties, the workingmen of Rhode Island began to ask for a shorter working day. "During the decade following 1829, the Democratic party [in Rhode Island] was in active sympathy with the plans of the workers; in fact, it came near being a workingmen's party."⁴ The chief democratic newspaper of the state became active in its support of the workingmen.

In the decade immediately preceding the panic of 1837, the spokesmen of the workingmen were using arguments similar to those used by such educational reformers as Carter and Mann. As the most important step leading toward the improvement of the working classes, in 1834, the editor of *The New England Artisan*, "insisted upon the necessity of their taking immediate measures to diminish their hours of labor so as to afford them ample time for mental improvement and for healthful exercise in the open air."⁵ At the convention of the National Trades' Union, the first national federation of Amer-

⁴ Towles, *Labor Legislation in Rhode Island*, p. 60.

⁵ Persons, *Labor Laws and Their Enforcement*, p. 15.

ican trade unions, held in 1836, a committee was appointed on the ten-hour system on government work. This committee reported that the memorials of a similar committee appointed at the preceding annual convention had been treated contemptuously by Congress. The committee recommended united action on the part of all unions in requesting the President of the United States to establish a ten-hour day for all governmental employees. President Van Buren was a skillful politician. He recognized that the labor vote had been an important factor in aiding Jackson and himself; and, in 1840, he paid his political debts by complying with the request made by organized labor.⁶

In the early thirties there was considerable discussion of the effect of a long working day upon the efficiency and moral stamina of wage earners; but the agitation was carried on almost entirely by the wage earners and a few humanitarian leaders. The general public and the press were either indifferent or hostile. A Boston newspaper in 1832 declared that labor organizations strike "at the very nerve of industry and good morals by dictating the hours of labor, abrogating the good old rule of our fathers and pointing out the most direct course to poverty; for to be idle several of the most useful hours of the morning and evening will surely lead

⁶Carlton, *The History and Problems of Organized Labor*, p. 37.

to intemperance and ruin.”⁷ For several years after the panic of 1837, there was very little discussion of conditions in American factories. About 1842, particularly in Massachusetts, the ten hour agitation was resumed. Various groups of factory workers began sending petitions to the legislature; and factory operatives for the first time in America played important rôles in the agitation for improved working conditions. Before 1837, except, perhaps, in Rhode Island, they had not been influential in labor movements.

The decade of the forties has been designated a “hot-air” period or an era of “unbounded loquacity.” Labor organizations were not strong and important, and those that did appear were idealistic rather than practical. Unionism and humanitarianism were curiously intermingled. Not until the following decade did labor begin to disentangle itself from humanitarianism. “Pure and simple,” or class conscious, trade unionism which had suffered an eclipse after 1837, began to appear again in the early fifties. The method of sending petitions to state legislatures became a favorite way of airing grievances in the forties. The various labor congresses and workingmen’s associations of the period often resorted to the petition. In Massachusetts, beginning with 1842, the legislatures were flooded with petitions asking for legislation establishing a

⁷ Myers, *History of Great American Fortunes*, vol. 2, p. 60; McNeill, *The Labor Movement*, p. 339.

ten-hour day in factories operated by corporations.

One of the most notable of these petitions was that from Lowell in 1842. The petitioners "earnestly pray that a Law may be enacted, in such a manner as to affect all the Manufacturing Corporations of this State, so that they shall not employ persons to work more than ten hours a day. The tendency of such a law would be good. It would, in the first place, serve to lengthen the lives of those employed, by giving them a greater opportunity to breathe the pure air of heaven, rather than the heated air of the mills. In the second place, they would have more time for mental and moral cultivation, which no one can deny is necessary for them in future life—(it ought not to be supposed that those who work in the mills will do so as long as life lasts). In the third place, they will have more time to attend to their own personal affairs, thereby saving considerable in their expenditures." ⁸ It is worthy of notice that this petition from the workers employed in the mills of Lowell gives the first place to the conservation of human resources,—lengthening the lives of the workers.

The rise in prices, which began in 1843 and continued for two or three years, stimulated labor agitation and multiplied the demands for improvement in the condition of the wage earners. At first, the ten-hour petitions found few friends in the

⁸ Quoted, Persons, *Labor Laws and Their Enforcement*, p. 26. *Massachusetts Archives*, No. 1215/5.

State Legislatures. Gradually, however, the sentiment became somewhat more favorable. Legislative committees from time to time made reports in regard to the ten-hour day. In Massachusetts, "so far as these reports go, the position of the employees was continually growing stronger."⁹ The corporations even found it necessary or expedient to start a campaign of education in opposition to the advocates of the ten-hour day. The state legislature of Pennsylvania conducted, in 1838, an investigation in regard to women and child workers in the factories of that state.¹⁰ In Massachusetts, in 1845, a committee was appointed to conduct an official investigation of labor conditions.

"The first ten-hour law" was passed by the legislature of New Hampshire in 1847. As might be expected, this initial law was very weak and easy to evade. The law provided for a ten-hour day unless an express contract was made requiring a longer working day. Minors under fifteen years of age could not work over ten hours per day "without the written consent of the parent or guardian of such minor first obtained." Horace Greeley, com-

⁹ Quoted, Persons, *Labor Laws and Their Enforcement*, p. 74.

¹⁰ This has been called the first official investigation into labor conditions in the United States; but, in 1825, the committee on education of the State Senate of Massachusetts made a report on child labor. However, in this case the investigations were made by town and city officials, not by the committee itself. See Commons and Andrews, *Principles of Labor Legislation*, p. 421.

menting upon this law, declared that employees were forced to sign contracts to work more than ten hours or lose their jobs. It was also alleged that a secret agreement existed among employers throughout the State.¹¹ In 1848, Pennsylvania passed a ten-hour law for textile mills. This law was also easily evaded. The employment of children under twelve years of age was prohibited. In 1853, through an agreement between employers and employees, the manufacturers of Delaware County, Pennsylvania, were operated on a ten-hour basis.¹² In 1853, Rhode Island also passed a ten-hour law which was rendered worthless by a clause permitting special contracts. California passed a ten-hour law in 1853; and Connecticut followed suit in 1855.

The friends of the ten-hour measure in Massachusetts refused to be satisfied with a sham law like that of New Hampshire; but the workers were not strong enough to force the passage of a law which was worth while. The strength of the *laissez faire* principle against which the ten-hour advocates contended is clearly shown by a report of a committee of the lower house in Massachusetts. "We think it would be better if the hours of labor were less, if more time were allowed for meals, if more attention were paid to ventilation and pure air." The

¹¹ *New York Tribune*, October 16, 1847.

¹² *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 8, pp. 188 ff.

committee, however, held that legislation was not the proper remedy. We "look for it in the progressive movement in art and science, in a higher appreciation of man's destiny, in a less love for money, and a more ardent love for social happiness and intellectual superiority."¹³

The agitation continued with gradually lessening vigor until about 1856, by which time the slavery question became the topic of all-absorbing interest. In 1853, many mills granted a sixty-six hour week. During the period of agitation, the working day was materially shortened in many trades outside the factories.¹⁴ Labor legislation was practically at a standstill from 1856 to 1866. The attention of everybody was focused upon problems directly connected with the war.

Up to 1848, a large percentage of the mill operatives had been New England men and women; but the influx of immigrants from Europe had started a decade earlier. Beginning in 1848, and lasting three or four years, occurred a depression in the textile industry. This depression, which was accompanied by a large amount of unemployment and by reductions of wages, coupled with the growing prejudice between men of different nationalities, caused the native New England workers to become dissatisfied with conditions in the factories. And, as railways and better roads were beginning to make

¹³ Quoted Persons, p. 49.

¹⁴ Quoted Persons, pp. 75 and 88.

the West more easily accessible, many now turned their faces toward the virgin farm lands of the West. The immigrant replaced the New Englander; and the character of the mill population changed rapidly. The potato famine in Ireland sent thousands of Irish immigrants to this country and many of the newcomers found jobs in the textile factories of New England. "In 1846, the number of Irish in the Lowell mills had been insignificant. In January, 1853, it was stated by competent authority that more than a third of the 11,976 operatives were foreigners."¹⁸ It is frequently urged that the standard of living of the mill workers was lowered as a consequence of immigration, and that the new workers were willing to work for lower wages and under more unfavorable conditions than the American. But, it must be remembered, the standard of living of the unskilled American laborer of the first half of the nineteenth century was exceedingly low.

The replacement of native-born workers by foreign-born workers in the factories of New England caused a shifting of the arguments for and against a shorter working day, child labor and other laws in regard to working conditions. The opponents of labor legislation had frequently urged that the independent American did not need paternalistic legislation for protection. With the influx of foreigners, however, this argument could no longer be

¹⁸ Quoted Persons, p. 57.

used; and the friends of labor legislation began to urge that these newcomers needed the protection of the law. Moreover, temporarily at least, the political strength of labor was weakened. The agitation for a shorter working day and for improved working conditions was affected by the influx of immigrants in two different ways. 1. The mill workers became less self-reliant and somewhat more docile, and, hence, factory legislation was needed to a greater extent in order to curb the employer. 2. But the workers were less able to carry on a successful agitation and to make their political influence felt.

Immediately after the close of the Civil War, perhaps the most significant demand made by the wage earners was for an eight-hour day. It was now boldly urged that the shorter working day by increasing the amount of leisure time for the workers would raise their standard of living. The demand for an eight-hour day was voiced by organized labor from the Atlantic to the Pacific. "In June, 1868, on the eve of a presidential election, Congress passed a soon-to-be-emasculated eight-hour law applying to all laborers and mechanics 'employed by or on behalf of the United States government.' The National Labor Union loudly proclaimed that it had been a potent factor in securing the passage of this act." ¹⁶

¹⁶ Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, pp. 59-60.

Eight-hour leagues were formed in various states. In Connecticut, the labor unionists formed such a league, and in 1867 they took part in the gubernatorial election. "Their campaigns were conducted under an eight-hour issue. They were promised, if successful, an eight-hour law. The dominant party did give them an eight-hour law but spoiled it for the laborers by adding a rider that it should not be obligatory if there was an agreement otherwise."¹⁷ The California legislature in 1868 after several years of agitation on the part of organized labor passed an eight-hour law. This act provided that eight hours should constitute a legal day's work unless a special contract was made. It was also provided that eight hours should constitute the legal day on public works. As a result of a decision of the State Supreme Court, "the eight-hour law of 1868 became little more than the enunciation of a principle, or a recommendation without power of enforcement."¹⁸ The California law of 1853 providing for a ten-hour day, unlike others of that period, 1847-1868, seems to have been effective, but it doubtless was made so because of the extra-legal strength of organized labor.

The establishment of Bureaus of Statistics of Labor was favored by the wage earners in the period

¹⁷ Quoted in Edwards, *The Labor Legislation of Connecticut*, p. 75, from *Report of Connecticut Bureau of Labor Statistics*, 1902, p. 332.

¹⁸ Eaves, *History of California Labor Legislation*, p. 211.

immediately following the Civil War. The pioneer in the field was Massachusetts. The organization of these bureaus meant the beginning of careful and exact investigations of labor conditions. In connection with the establishment of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1869, the following statement is significant: "Perhaps an inference may be drawn as to the confidence felt by the laborers in the justice of their cause from the fact that the bureau whose function was to be careful first hand inspection of conditions was established on their expressed request."¹⁹ The wage workers also favored the establishment of a federal department of labor. For example, in 1869, the official publication of the National Labor Union demanded such a department; and the California State Labor Convention which met in January, 1872, favored a federal labor bureau.

Little labor legislation of the now familiar type was passed until after 1880. The agitation on the part of the wage earners during preceding decades secured the passage of mechanics' lien laws, of laws abolishing imprisonment for debt, and of laws providing better educational facilities. Not until organizations of workingmen became stronger, more coherent and more permanent, and not until after nearly all desirable free land was taken up, did the demand for laws providing effectively for a shorter working day, for the restriction of child labor, and

¹⁹ Persons, *Labor Laws and Their Enforcement*, p. 109.

for the protection of wage earners while at work, become sufficiently strong to prod our legislatures into activity. Nevertheless, the long, insistent agitation must have played an important rôle in preparing the way. In recent years, organized labor has been a leading factor in securing the passage of a multitude of labor laws,—often in the face of bitter opposition from employers of labor. One of the chief purposes, if not the chief purpose, of State Federations of Labor is political, to influence legislation. In addition to legislation directly affecting working conditions, organized labor has exerted its influence toward securing such reforms as the Australian ballot system, the initiative and referendum, and civil service reform.

It is almost unnecessary to give concrete illustrations of the part which organized labor played in the last two decades of the nineteenth century in securing the passage of labor legislation; but a few will be presented. "The alien contract labor law was enacted almost solely at the demand of organized labor." In order to meet what the wage earners considered to be unfair competition "the labor unions, and especially the Knights of Labor, secured through Congress specific legislation known as the alien contract labor law of 1885, with the amendments of 1886 and 1888."²⁰ This federal statute bars from the country aliens who arrive under contract to work for some American employer of labor.

²⁰ *Report of the Industrial Commission*, vol. 15, p. 647.

In the eighties, in spite of much opposition, New Jersey definitely "committed itself to the policy of restricting child employment. But this it did chiefly under pressure from labor organizations."²¹ In Connecticut, "since 1885, organized labor has been the chief factor in securing labor legislation, either by direct legislative campaigns or by agitation outside the legislature, or by both. It is safe to say that without the influence exerted by organized labor, few of the labor laws would have been passed when they were, and, probably, many of them never would have been passed."²²

For at least half a century organized labor has demanded changes in the system of labor employed in American prisons. As early as 1864, a vice-president of the molders' union was ordered to work for a bill before the New York legislature "regulating prison labor." Year after year representatives of organized labor have been demanding the abolition of the contract convict labor system. The activity of the molders of Ohio in securing legislation abolishing contract labor in the Ohio penitentiary is worthy of mention. Candidates for the legislature were forced to commit themselves upon the proposition; and representatives of the molders' union went to the capitol of the State. "Whenever lukewarmness or an inclination to 'side-step' was observed, the Business Agent at once informed local

²¹ Field, *The Child Labor Policy of New Jersey*, p. 218.

²² Edwards, *Labor Legislation in Connecticut*, p. 314.

unions in each district and they, in turn, saw to it that the doubtful legislators were liberally supplied with communications informing them that their actions must come up to their campaign promises." ²³ A well-informed student of penology gives organized labor much credit for the improvement of prison conditions. "Organized labor with its long and persistent agitation against the unfair competition of convict goods upon the open market probably has been the strongest force toward the development of the State's function in the care of the prisoner. As the control of the State upon prison industries has become greater, the power of labor to restrict them through control of the State Legislatures has become also greater, and the history of most of our States shows that, when labor is once aroused to an antagonism to any specific form of commodity manufactured in prison, sufficient influence can be brought to bear to abolish its manufacture." ²⁴

Organized labor also played an important rôle in the long struggle to give seamen rights similar to those accorded wage workers on land. Before the passage of the Seamen's Act of 1915, seamen were treated "as deficient in that full and intelligent responsibility for their acts which is accredited to ordinary adults." For a score of years, Andrew Furuseth, president of the International Seamen's

²³ Stockton, *International Molders' Journal*, June, 1916.

²⁴ Whitin, *Penal Servitude*, p. 7.

Union, had worked with unflagging energy to obtain the passage of a law making "the sailor a free man."²⁵

The attitude of organized labor toward the restriction of immigration, especially Chinese immigration, is worthy of more extended notice. The westward migration of European peoples has constituted a selective process. The alert, vigorous, self-reliant and aggressive have been ever the followers of the frontier line. In California, the extreme west, separated from the eastern section by important natural barriers, the characteristics of the frontier type were found raised to their highest power. Growth was rapid in the early years of Californian history, money was plentiful, labor scarce, and a new labor supply difficult to obtain. "For many years there was no great industrial center between San Francisco and the Mississippi from which a supply of skilled labor could be drawn." Yet, here in this coast country of high wages and deficient labor supply, a veritable unionists' paradise, came the menace of the low-grade immigrant in its most extreme form. The workers of the Pacific Coast faced the danger of a flood of low-standard-of-living Orientals who had learned to live under conditions considered impossible by the alert and ambitious western workingmen. The comparative isolation of California, and the constant dread of the Oriental contributed the chief elements which made

²⁵ La Follette, *La Follette's Magazine*, April, 1915.

the labor organizations of that state peculiarly strong and effective industrially and politically.

"From the early fifties to the present time there have been organizations in which all classes of wage workers joined to promote the exclusion of Asiatic labor. It is the one subject upon which there has never been the slightest difference of opinion, the one measure on which it has always been possible to obtain concerted action." ²⁸ And, on the other hand, the frequent strikes, high wages and the constant agitation of the American workingmen, caused the employers in California to look with special favor upon the docile and uncomplaining Chinese coolie who was quite willing to accept a low wage for a long working day. The Chinese coolie was considered by many employers to approximate the ideal employee or hand.

Throughout the long and bitter agitation against Chinese immigration culminating in the exclusion act of 1882 the wage earners of the Pacific Coast were aggressive and untiring. At the present time, organized labor would doubtless vigorously oppose any proposition favoring the admission of Chinese laborers on the same terms as those from European countries. The American Federation of Labor in 1911 endorsed the report of the recent Immigration Commission which advocated increased restriction upon immigration, and has used its influence to secure the passage of the bills before Congress which

²⁸ Eaves, *History of California Labor Legislation*, p. 6.

provided for the literacy test. The literacy test was included in the provisions of the bill passed over the President's veto in 1917.

The socialist movement is international; and the traditional policy of the socialists has been one of opposition to the restriction of the freedom of migration from one country to another. The International Socialist Congress held at Stuttgart in 1907 adopted a resolution in favor of the "abolition of all restrictions which exclude definite nationalities or races from the right of sojourn in the country." But the American socialists are no longer united in favor of unrestricted immigration. The American Socialist Party Congresses of 1910 and 1912 were divided upon the immigration question. A considerable and influential element in the two Congresses favored the continued exclusion of Asiatic laborers. The Socialist Labor Party in 1916 indorsed the Stuttgart resolution in regard to immigration. The socialists have opposed the literacy test; and Mr. London, the socialist member of Congress, voted against the bill providing for the literacy test.²⁷

In recent years, the agitation for labor legislation has entered a new phase; many far-sighted employers are to-day favoring such legislation as workingmen's compensation, old age pensions and minimum wage laws. Large scale, corporate industry now plans for the future; and, consequently, the effi-

²⁷ *The American Labor Year Book*, 1916, pp. 94, 322; *The Socialism of To-day*, 1916, pp. 495ff.

ciency of the future labor supply has become a matter of concern. This situation has caused employers actuated by business rather than by humanitarian reasons to advocate, or at least not to oppose, such measures as those mentioned above. Paternalism or state socialism was a leading tenet of the middle-class insurgent of the first part of the second decade of the twentieth century; but the war perceptibly weakened the strength of the movement for state socialism. Labor legislation which aims to reduce the sickness, accident and death rates, and to increase the working efficiency of the wage earners of the country, now meets with little opposition from the large and far-seeing employers of the country. Only a group of reactionaries who still cling to eighteenth century ideals are in bitter and outspoken opposition to welfare legislation. Business managers are beginning to see that an inefficient and constantly changing labor force is undesirable; that, in the long run, an efficient force is worth the sacrifice of a portion of immediate profits.

With the elimination of the frontier, the disappearance of unappropriated natural resources, centralization in industry, and the application of scientific methods in business, a new era opened. Unrestricted competition with its wastefulness and shortsightedness did not assume a menacing attitude so long as resources seemed inexhaustible. But after the mantle of private property was spread over the best of America's natural wealth, after the pioneer

farmer, the rule-of-thumb manufacturer, and the reckless miner had skimmed the cream from the enormous, but not unlimited, resources of the nation, a new situation obtained. Corporations looking far into the future came into being. Even before the Great War opened, questions centering around the supply of raw materials and of labor began to attract attention; and the leading captains of industry began to discard the *laissez-faire* policy. They began to join hands with wage earners and social workers in demanding certain forms of labor legislation. This modification in the attitude of employers was due directly to the extraordinary economic and industrial changes of recent decades which have transformed the face of the American continent, and made us a nation of urban dwellers and industrial workers living without a frontier to act as a safety valve. Charity organization societies, Blackwell's Islands, homes for the defectives, jails and the like are expensive. Welfare legislation of the recent type will tend to improve the conditions of city life, to reduce the number of weaklings, defectives, degenerates and delinquents. Such legislation will, therefore, on the one hand tend to improve the efficiency of the labor force of the country and, on the other, to reduce the cost of caring for the subnormal and abnormal members of the community.

But, although the employer has within a decade materially shifted his point of view, it does not fol-

low that he has taken that held by the wage earner. The employers' point of view is only an up-to-date Hamiltonian point of view. The conservation of human resources will produce a more efficient and effective working force. Benevolent paternalism, not industrial democracy, is still the aim of the average employer. Herein lies the cleavage between the working and the employing classes.

Industrial concentration and integration and the entrance of the United States into the War have brought about a peculiar modification in the attitude of different classes toward social welfare legislation. This shifting of alignment may be illustrated by considering minimum wage legislation. A quarter of a century ago, a proposal to establish a minimum wage for women and children employed in a few sweated industries would have received support only from a small portion of the wage earners and from certain humanitarian leaders. The employers and the middle class generally would have hailed it as dangerously radical. In 1912, Massachusetts passed a minimum wage law. This was the first measure of its kind placed upon the statute books of an American commonwealth. But in the following year, eight states enacted similar legislation; and at the opening of the year 1918, twelve states had such legislation upon their statute books.

In the immediate future, opposition to such welfare measures as minimum-wage laws may be expected to come chiefly from groups of reactionary

employers, from radical groups of socialists and from organized labor. The socialists, and many unionists who are not socialists, fear that the tendency of such legislation is toward what has aptly been termed "benevolent feudalism." They declare that the able and far-seeing leaders of the capitalists have found that underpaid labor is not profitable in the long run. From this point of view, the establishment of a legal minimum wage will aid the capitalist in developing an efficient source of labor power, and in preventing the growth of organized labor. In short, the impossibilist socialist and others declare that minimum wage and other welfare legislation are business propositions. Certain it is that organized labor in the United States in the months immediately preceding April, 1917, was placing less and less emphasis upon legislation which aimed to regulate the terms of employment. This changed point of view of organized labor in regard to legislation was of recent origin. The further discussion of this point has been reserved for chapter X.

Since about 1908, organized labor has stressed legislation of the third type. The sweeping injunction granted in the Buck Stove and Range Case, the subsequent prosecution of the labor leaders, President Gompers, Vice-President Mitchell and Secretary Morrison of the American Federation of Labor, the Danbury Hatters' case which approved the mulcting of organized labor for damages under

the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, and the frequent use of the injunction in the case of strikes and boycotts, led organized labor, beginning about 1908, vigorously to demand federal legislation granting exemption to unions from anti-trust legislation and restricting the use of the injunction. The emphasis was placed upon laws distinctly favorable to organized labor rather than upon legislation beneficial to the wage earners as a class. The issue was forced by the decisions of the courts and the menace arising out of the political activities of such anti-union associations as the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Anti-Boycott Association.²⁸

After several years of active agitation, the so-called Clayton Act, amending the Sherman Act, was passed in 1914. This act specifically states that labor is not a commodity. It declares that labor organizations shall not be considered illegal combinations under the federal anti-trust laws; and it also limits the right of the federal courts to issue injunctions in the case of labor disputes. The Clayton Act has been called "the charter of industrial liberty"; and it has been held by the friends of organized labor to constitute an important item in the annals of labor organizations. But some competent authorities hold

²⁸ The decision in *Hitchman Coal & Coke Co.* case renewed the interest in political action on the part of organized labor.

that the law makes little change in the legal status of union labor.

As this legislation does not control the decisions of state courts, labor leaders are attempting to obtain similar legislation in the different states. One of the most capable spokesmen of organized labor, Mr. John P. Frey, writes that "no half-way measures can be satisfactory. The contest has been forced upon us by State Courts, and we must centralize our forces upon the next State Legislatures in such a manner as will force them to enact laws which safeguard our rights within the boundaries of the separate states as effectively as they are now safeguarded by the law of the land."²⁰ The first test of these state laws has resulted in a decision unfavorable to the demands of organized labor. In 1916, the Supreme Court of Massachusetts held the law of that state, passed in 1904 but similar in many respects to the Clayton Act, to be unconstitutional. The act declared among other things that the labor contract should be held to be a personal, not a property, right. The court decided that this clause is a violation of the provisions of the fourteenth amendment to the Federal Constitution.

It is a lamentable fact that organized labor has, with some exceptions, held aloof from one of the great movements which promises much for the wage earners of the nation. The long campaign against alcohol received little encouragement from organ-

²⁰ *International Molders' Journal*, July, 1916, p. 622.

ized labor. But it seems clear that a de-alcoholized and alert mass of industrial workers is essential to successful progress toward better working conditions and toward industrial democracy. The sentiment in regard to this reform movement, among workers, however, gives indication of changing.

Unenforced legislation is worse in some respects than no legislation. If it is to accomplish the purpose for which it was ostensibly passed, labor legislation must be supported by efficient and sympathetic administration. Administration "is a method of legislation;" it "is legislation in action."⁸⁰ Indeed, it is as vital, or more vital, than legislation. The importance of efficient administration of laws has usually been overlooked. Too often reformers of many types and the members of labor organizations have eagerly and earnestly demanded and obtained certain reform measures only to find the laws unenforced or unenforceable. In recent years the problems of administration are fortunately attracting more and more attention. If labor legislation be administered by officials favorable to its enforcement, one result will follow; but if administered by officials unfavorable to its proper enforcement, a very different result will be noted. Labor laws administered by officials antagonistic to the demands and aspirations of American workingmen will not accomplish the results anticipated by the

⁸⁰ Commons and Andrews, *Principles of Labor Legislation*, p. 415.

friends of such legislation. On the other hand, labor legislation enforced by officials in sympathy with the working class may be expected to bring consequences which are looked upon with favor by the workers.

A considerable number of union men are holding administrative offices in the federal and state service. The cases of Mr. Powderly, formerly head of the Knights of Labor, of John Mitchell, former president of the United Mine Workers, and of Secretary of Labor Wilson, former secretary of the same organization, are well known. Mr. Portenar, a union printer and the author of a book entitled, *Problems of Organized Labor*, was (1916) the superintendent of the Bureau of Employment in the New York State Department of Labor; Mr. J. M. Lynch, former president of the Typographical Union, was a member of the Industrial Commission of New York; Mr. E. E. Clark, former head of the Railway Conductors, was a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission; Mr. W. J. French, ex-president of the San Francisco Typographical Union, was a member of the state industrial accident commission; and Thomas J. Duffy, former president of the National Brotherhood of Operative Potters, was a member of the Ohio Industrial Commission. The Commissioner of Immigration for the port of Boston was a union man. In the autumn of 1917, John P. White resigned the presidency of the United Mine Workers to become one of the two

chief assistants of Coal Administrator Garfield. According to the laws of certain states, some appointive positions must be filled by wage workers. For example, in Illinois three of the commissioners of labor must be manual laborers; in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania one must be a wage earner; in Ohio the chief deputy under the industrial commission must be a practical mechanic; Virginia and West Virginia require the commissioner of labor to be identified with the labor interests of the State.³¹

The appointment of a considerable number of influential persons in the ranks of labor organizations to positions in the federal and state service will have two somewhat antagonistic effects. First, the administration of labor laws will be more satisfactory to the wage earning group than is the case when all administrative positions are filled by persons antagonistic or indifferent to the aspirations of the workers as a class. It will even be more satisfactory than when all positions are filled by well-trained men and women who are not closely affiliated with the wage workers. The presence of some representatives of the wage earners will allay suspicion of prejudiced interpretation and biased rulings.

In the second place, however, it has been pointed out that "one of the disasters of trade unionism is the ambition of its own members for political jobs

³¹ *American Labor Legislation Review*, December, 1913.

and salaries.”⁸² As soon as a union man gets a political appointment, he is in danger of losing his enthusiasm for unionism. His job depends too often upon political pull and astuteness rather than upon activity in union circles. He comes in contact with new associates and new influences; his point of view changes. If the political appointee owed his position to the success of a distinct labor party doubtless the results would be quite different. In short, the drafting of many influential unionists into governmental positions, as well as the promotion of certain unionists in private business, is by no means an unmixed good from the standpoint of virile and aggressive unionism. “Professor Commons insists that promotion and political preferment are the important outlets from the ambitious and the radical; these are the solvents of class solidarity among the workers. The man who is being promoted, or who sees dangling before his eyes a political job, is furnished a potent incentive for conservatism.”⁸³

The divergence of ideas in regard to the scope and methods of administration between social workers and students of economics on the one hand and labor leaders on the other is considerable. Professor Commons has presented the former point of

⁸² Commons and Andrews, *Principles of Labor Legislation*, p. 449.

⁸³ Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, p. 92.

view in the following fashion:—"Although employers and employees may have hopelessly divergent opinions on policy, when that policy is once determined upon by Congress they are equally concerned in its efficient and disinterested administration." The administration law "should be administered by disinterested parties in coöperation with representatives of capital and labor."⁸⁴ The unionists have less confidence in the possibility of disinterested administration. "Manufacturers, financiers, the captains of industry and commerce have been accorded ample representation consequently profits and business expediency have been given first consideration. But the wage earners are fully aware of the necessity of being represented in all organizations or commissions authorized to determine questions affecting their welfare, and they are now demanding a full right of representation in all of the activities of the nation's life. They demand representatives of their own choosing from among wage earners who know of the life and problems of wage earners."⁸⁵ Organized labor insists that it should be represented upon such commissions as the Tariff Commission, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Pan-American Commission, and the various war-time commissions and boards.

⁸⁴ *Report of Commission on Industrial Relations, 1915, pp. 331-2.*

⁸⁵ *Report of the Executive Committee, Proceedings of the Convention of the American Federation of Labor, 1916, p. 109.*

The economists and social workers hold that the administration of legislation must become a profession, a life career for well-trained men. It is urged that our colleges and universities should become training schools for the public service. From this point of view, the appointment of labor men or of employers to positions on commissions charged with administrative duties is a mistake. The workingman, it is confidently asserted, does not have an opportunity to obtain the necessary training. Wisconsin is often pointed to as an example of success in administration; and Wisconsin's success is primarily due to the efforts of well-trained men. But, after all, is the matter quite so clear and simple as the friends of the trained expert assume? Can the expert take a position which will satisfy both sides? If administration is "legislation in action," are both sides interested in "disinterested administration"? In reality, are they not interested as much in partial or one-sided administration as in legislation of that type? Until some common standard which both sides accept is established, can we expect expert administration to be eminently successful?

In the administration of labor legislation, it must be admitted that human judgment and human will play a large part. There exists in the administration of law as yet no purely scientific basis or standard from which no rational appeal is possible; the matter cannot be definitely and authoritatively settled by solving a mathematical equation. Adminis-

trators are human; they are not supermen; and their rôle is not merely that of expert calculators. The administrator is not dealing with purely objective scientific facts. Administrative formulæ contain many variables; the personal equation of the official enters too largely for exact and undebatable determinations. Furthermore, if administration be "legislation in action," is not the principle of proportional or interest representation as applicable to administrative commissions as to legislative bodies?

Doubtless much can be accomplished by expert administrative officials charged with the enforcement of labor legislation; but when vital interests are at stake either employers or employees are quite likely to brand the expert as unfair or prejudiced. The trained expert in social legislation treads a much more intricate and a much less sharply defined path than does the physician or the engineer. In view of the clashing opinions of medical experts in many courts, in view of the disagreement among experts in the educational field, in view of the differences of opinion among engineering experts, and, further, in view of the unwelcome fact that expert advice and testimony in the past has been too often shaded by the bread-and-butter view of the situation, is it not asking too much of human nature to expect workers quietly to abide by expert determination of matters in the field of social legislation which are of great practical and immediate import to them? At the present time, it seems quite clear

that labor is going to insist that the expert in social legislation be checked by the power of organized labor. Unfortunately, union men are not yet ready to accept quietly and without protest the dictum of well-trained public officials unless that dictum is pleasing to the unionists; and more unfortunately their attitude is not very dissimilar from that of other groups in the community.

The great majority of the reconstruction puzzles after the war are to be primarily labor problems. These will be solved, or at least should be, in the light of war experiences. Some of the important questions will be minimum wage legislation, greater equality of income, the reduction of industrial conflicts and of race and national hatreds, the elimination of leisure except as a vacation. These are indeed problems which require careful and scientific study; but the experts, if they are to accomplish worth-while results, must free themselves of all taint of being controlled by great financial interests. It has been well said that the common man will not accept leadership "from the hirelings of wealth on the one hand, or from the panders to popular prejudice and passion on the other;" but he will "gratefully accept disinterested and informed leadership."⁸ The Mitchel administration in New York City probably failed at the polls in part because the great mass of the electorate felt its leadership was not purely "disinterested," and in part because they be-

⁸ Editorial, *The Nation*, February 28, 1918.

lieved that the sweeping reforms fathered by Mitchel's social workers and experts were "instigated by a group of fussy and superior people who belonged to an alien social class."⁸⁷ The success of the National War Labor Board was in no small measure due to the representation of both labor and capital upon the Board.

⁸⁷ *The New Republic*, May 4, 1918, p. 6.

CHAPTER VII

OTHER REFORM MOVEMENTS AND THE WAGE EARNER

The Abolition of Slavery. The early abolition movement in the United States was of the humanitarian type. At its head were such men as Garrison, Birney, Gerrit Smith, Tappan and Phillips. The pioneer abolitionist met with much bitter opposition not only in the South but in the North as well. In the thirties, a mob was organized to attack James G. Birney in Cincinnati, Lovejoy was murdered in Illinois, and colored men were ejected from trains running into Boston. In 1836, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church passed a resolution of censure on two of its members who had spoken in favor of abolition.¹ Sumner in 1848 and Emerson in 1851 were hissed by students of Harvard College because they dared to express anti-slavery sentiments. In Michigan as late as 1850, "they talked of tar and feathers for abolitionists."² In 1853, Frederick Douglass, the famous Negro, declared that the "prejudice against the free colored people has shown itself nowhere so invincible as

¹ Hart, *Slavery and Abolition*, p. 212.

² *Detroit Free Press*, January 6, 1909.

among mechanics." In 1860, the *Northwestern Christian Advocate* asserted that "slavery has never been proven to be a sin similar to polygamy, idolatry and drunkenness." This organ of the Methodist Church also called attention to the fact that slavery rested upon good Biblical authority. Great Presbyterian divines, "North as well as South, were the most ardent protagonists of slavery."⁸

In the face of this opposition to the abolition movement, what force or forces operated to push the nation into the Civil War? The key to this complex and fascinating problem may be found by studying the industrial evolution of the North during the two or three decades immediately preceding 1860. Not the abolition but the nonextension of slavery into the West was the issue which led directly to the opening of hostilities between the industrial and small farming North and the plantation and slaveholding South. The growing class of wage workers in the North came instinctively to feel that slavery was a menace to wage earners individually and as a class. It was felt that the existence of slavery tended to depress the working class of the nation. With the rush of Irish and German immigrants in the forties, the eastern employers of wage labor saw a new and plentiful source of labor supply provided. They soon became convinced that the dotting of the great undeveloped West with small farms would greatly increase the demand for their

⁸ Dodd, *American Historical Review*, vols. 16, 18.

manufactured products without making a serious drain upon their labor supply. In fact, as fast as the native American wage worker moved to the western frontier, his place was filled by the immigrant eager to obtain a foothold in the promised land—America.

As a consequence, the industrial interests and the wage earners of the North united in opposition to the extension of slavery and for a homestead act. These elements were chiefly responsible for the birth and early growth of the Republican party. Many of the then recent immigrants also looked with favor upon the program of the Republican party. The votes of the German and other recent immigrants probably turned the scale in several Western States in favor of Lincoln and of the Union in the election of 1860. On that memorable election day, a change of one vote in every twenty would have given Douglas the entire Northwest; and Lincoln would have been defeated.⁴

In the election of 1856, the influence of manufacture and of the wage workers is clearly discernible. "Practically all the counties on the line of the Erie Canal and the southern shore of Lake Erie went Republican in the election of 1856. The important exceptions were Erie County, in which Buffalo is located, and three counties bordering on the lake. Allegheny County, including the city of Pittsburgh, was carried by the Republicans. All New England went Republican. The Republican party was strong

⁴ See Dodd in *American Historical Review*, vol. 16.

wherever the New England man had migrated and along the highways of commerce and communication between the upper Mississippi valley and the Atlantic seaboard." ⁵

In the campaign of 1856, the newly organized Republican party appealed to the working people of the North. Among the campaign documents used in that political contest is one which calls attention to assertions of Southerners indicating that the latter are reaching the conclusion that slavery of whites as well as blacks is desirable. The following quotations were printed in this document intended for campaign purposes. The first is alleged to be copied from "a South Carolina paper." "The great evil of Northern *free* society is that it is burdened with a *servile* class of *mechanics* and *laborers unfit for self-government*, and yet clothed with the attributes and powers of *citizens*. Master and Slave is a relation as necessary as that of parent and child; and the Northern States will yet have to introduce it. Slavery is the natural and normal condition of the *laboring man*, whether *white* or black." And the *Richmond Enquirer* is quoted as saying that the principle of slavery "does not depend on *difference of complexion*." ⁶

Lincoln in one of the speeches made in the famous debate with Douglas in 1854, stated, "Slave States

⁵ Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, p. 49.

⁶ Pamphlet in Columbia University Library.

are places for poor white people to remove from, not to remove to. New free States are the places for poor people to go to, and better their condition. For this use the nation needs these Territories." The extension of slavery into the Territories was held up as a menace to the common man,—the wage earner of the North. The Republican leaders were trying to impress upon all the workers and home-seekers of the North that the extension of slavery into the Territories was inimical to their best interests. In the South white laborers were trying to restrict the occupation of the slave, and legislation was demanded to aid them. In 1845, the Legislature of Georgia passed an act prohibiting the hiring of slaves or free Negroes as masons or mechanics for the erection or repair of buildings.⁷

The wage earners of the North, persons who wished to seek homes in the territories, the industrial interests of the North, and the humanitarians and abolitionists were able to unite in a sectional party committed to the nonextension of slavery. Industrialism and humanitarianism were ready to unite to oppose the Southern slave owners. The former were interested in breaking down Southern supremacy in politics and in preventing the extension of slavery into new territory. The latter were against both slavery extension and slavery itself.

⁷ *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 2: 364-65, 360-61. See also Phillips, *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 22:428.

The success of this sectional party—the Republican party—in 1860 precipitated the Civil War; and the abolition of slavery followed as an almost inevitable consequence.

It is clear that the Northern workingmen were not moved by an altruistic desire to aid the Negro slave. During the war the introduction of black workers as competitors of the whites or as strikebreakers led to serious disturbances. "The competition offered by Negroes was small, but in many places it called forth opposition which frequently passed beyond mere protest into bloodshed and murder."⁸ For example, in March, 1863, there was a strike among the dock laborers in New York City. Some Negroes were temporarily employed as strikebreakers; and these were attacked by the strikers.⁹ Nevertheless, as long as slavery existed in the United States the Northern workingmen did not feel secure. They feared encroachments upon their constitutional rights.¹⁰ The real issue in 1860, however, was not the abolition of slavery.

The Preservation of the Union. In the preceding section it was pointed out that the workingmen of the North were firmly opposed to the further extension of slavery into the territories. The political campaign of 1860 placed in power the party defi-

⁸ Fite, *Social and Industrial Conditions during the Civil War*, p. 189.

⁹ *New York Tribune*, March 24, 1863; January 26, 1863.

¹⁰ See Powderly, *Thirty Years of Labor*, p. 51.

nately committed to this principle; and the election of Lincoln was the step which precipitated the secession movement on the part of the Southern States. In short, the Republican party was essentially a nonslavery extension party; but before it obtained control of the governmental machinery, an entirely new issue was faced. The question of the hour was: Should or should not coercion be used to force the Southern States to remain within the Union? And coercion meant war to the bitter end between North and South.

The attitude of the workingmen of the North toward the preservation of the Union by force was not essentially different from that of the farmers, the business men and the professional men of the same section. The firing upon Fort Sumter crystallized the sentiment in favor of preserving the Union at all hazards. Before that time the data available indicate that the wage earners favored a compromise which would avoid war. The workers were also inclined to lay the blame for the difficulties confronting the nation at the door of the "politicians."

Many mass meetings of workingmen were held in the early part of 1861; and a national convention of workingmen met in Philadelphia on February 22, 1861. The following references to meetings are indicative of the attitude of the wage earners during the trying weeks immediately preceding the inauguration of President Lincoln. On January 12,

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1861, the mechanics and workingmen of Evansville, Indiana, met and passed resolutions on the state of the nation. Copies were sent to Congress. The resolutions embodied the following points: Their earnest support of the Union and Constitution was pledged; scheming politicians were the cause of the pending troubles; the approval of the Crittenden compromise; the workingmen were urged to demand the repeal of the personal liberty laws; the workers were also urged not to support a party which was merely sectional; provision was made for representation in the workingmen's convention held at Philadelphia on February 22, 1861.¹¹ A mass meeting of workingmen held in Philadelphia, January 26, 1861, petitioned Congress to adopt the so-called Crittenden compromise.¹² A similar meeting held in Newark, New Jersey, early in January, also recommended the adoption of the same compromise.¹³ An "immense" mass meeting of workingmen was held in Pittsburgh on January 11, 1861. Resolutions were adopted expressing devout attachment to the Union and calling upon the President to execute the law.¹⁴ And even in Cincinnati on the Ohio River, resolutions were adopted at a meeting of workingmen held on January 4, 1861, declaring that

¹¹ House of Representatives, 36th Congress, 2d Sess. *Misc. Doc. No. 19.*

¹² House of Representatives, 36th Congress, 2d Sess. *Misc. Doc. No. 30.*

¹³ *New York Tribune*, January 11, 1861.

¹⁴ *Illinois State Register*, January 12, 1861.

the Union must be preserved. It was also declared that the remedy for all grievances can be found under the Constitution.¹⁵ During the war, one third of the "average number of men affiliating" with the Typographical Union No. 6, of New York, enlisted in the Northern army.¹⁶

The quite general support of the Crittenden compromise on the part of the workingmen of the North was in harmony with the policy of opposition to the extension of slavery into the territories. According to this compromise, slavery was to be excluded from all territorial lands north of the celebrated parallel, 36° 30'. In territory south of this line slavery was to be allowed under federal protection. The workers could well give adherence to this proposal because it opened up the Western lands to the small farmer. There was no movement of importance of Northern settlers into the territory south of the compromise line. In short, the adoption of this proposed amendment to the Constitution would have satisfied the chief demand which led them to give their adherence to the Republican party.

The national convention of workingmen in Philadelphia was called to order by William H. Sylvis. This convention did not apparently result in any definite demonstration against or for the Union. A committee was appointed whose chief purpose was to encourage organization and to get men elected

¹⁵ Moore, *Putnam's Record of the Rebellion*, vol. 1, p. 10.

¹⁶ *History of Typographical Union No. 6*, p. 604.

who were not and would not become "tools of corporations." Powderly indicates that the germ of national organization of all workers is to be found in the work of this committee.¹⁷

The interpretation of the attitude of the workingmen in 1861 given by Mr. Powderly, who was the leader of the Knights of Labor when that organization reached its high tide, is worthy of extended notice. "The Civil War, whose mutterings had been reverberating through the United States, came upon the mechanics of America at a time when they were putting forth every effort to perfect their separate unions. The war, when it broke out, found among those who were most bitterly opposed to it the trades unionists of the North and the South; they saw in the coming struggle a menace to the welfare of the country which they would turn aside if possible. The bonds of fraternity between the mechanics of the United States was a means of causing some of the leading trades unionists to call a convention for the purpose of expressing the disapproval of the workingmen of the attempts to foment sectional strife and bitterness."¹⁸ The convention referred to was the one held in Philadelphia.

Some of the leaders of the workingmen doubtless opposed war because they felt that the chief burdens of any war fall upon the shoulders of the wage-earning population. "Among the working-

¹⁷ Powderly, *Thirty Years of Labor*, pp. 46 and 53.

¹⁸ Powderly, *Thirty Years of Labor*, pp. 44, 45.

men, a few choice spirits, North and South, knowing that all the burdens and none of the honors of war are entailed upon labor, were engaged in an effort to frustrate the plans of those who seemed to desire, and whose fanaticism was calculated to precipitate, hostilities."¹⁰ The persons referred to in the latter portion of this quotation are doubtless the "scheming politicians" of the resolution adopted at Evansville, Indiana.

It must not be overlooked, in any discussion of the attitude of the wage earners toward the preservation of the Union, that before Fort Sumter was fired upon, many Northern men of all walks of life opposed coercion of the seceding States. On March 15, 1861, five of the seven cabinet officers opposed the relief of Fort Sumter. Horace Greeley's statement is quite familiar. "We hope never to live in a republic, whereof one section is pinned to another by bayonets." And as late as April 9, 1861, Wendell Phillips asserted that "Abraham Lincoln has no right to a soldier in Fort Sumter." But in 1862, he wrote: "From 1843 to 1861, I was a disunionist. . . . Sumter changed the whole question. After that peace and justice both forbade disunion." And the firing on Fort Sumter affected the workers of the North as it did Wendell Phillips and the great mass of Northern people. Lowell wrote of "that

¹⁰ Sylvis, *Biography of W. H. Sylvis*, p. 42; quoted in Simons, *Social Forces in American History*, p. 283.

first gun at Sumter which brought the free States to their feet as one man."

The largest and most aggressive disloyal organization during the Civil War was a secret order called the "Knights of the Golden Circle." In the platform of this organization adopted in 1859 is contained no indication that the workingmen of the North were especially interested in the movement. It is probable that some wage earners were members. Mr. Vallandigham of Ohio was at one time a leader of this organization.

The draft riots of 1863 in New York and Pennsylvania have led some writers to infer that the workingmen of the North were disloyal to the Union. The wealthy were practically exempt from the provisions of the draft; and it was, therefore, urged that the draft was unjust to the workingmen. The employment of Negroes virtually as strikebreakers had stirred up much bitterness. It was felt that wage workers were being forced into military service in behalf of these new "scabs," the Negroes.

"The 'anti-draft riots' that took place in many cities, and especially in New York, partook of many of the characteristics of a labor movement. They began with a general strike, or an attempt at such a strike. The spokesmen of the movement were insistent in their denunciation of the 'exemption clauses' that enabled rich men to escape the draft. There were many who demanded that 'money as

well as men should be drafted.' " ²⁰ The draft and the riots followed a period of industrial unrest, strikes for higher wages and the use of Negro strike-breakers. The provisions of the draft and the industrial situation afforded combustible material for a fierce disturbance. But "industrial discontent was a fundamental cause of the riots." ²¹

The Extension of the Suffrage. One of the most interesting and important of the political and social phenomena of the first half of the nineteenth century was the extension of the right to cast the ballot. In spite of the high sounding phrases of the Declaration of Independence, the common man, the man without property, was denied the ballot until the influence of the frontier and of the workingmen became sufficiently strong and potent to break down the conservatism of the coast and the propertied interests. In 1776, "not manhood qualifications, but tax receipts, church creeds and white skins were required of those who would vote. . . . The man without land could not be trusted. The man without piety was not to have political power." ²² The extension of the suffrage gave political power into the hands of two numerically increasing classes, the frontier settlers and the workingmen of the towns.

²⁰ Simons, *Social Forces in American History*, p. 283.

²¹ Fite, *Social and Industrial Conditions during the Civil War*, p. 190.

²² Stevenson, *The Growth of the Nation, 1809 to 1837*, in the *History of North America*, vol. 12, p. 13.

Four influences seem to have been chiefly responsible for the new enactments with regard to the suffrage: The belief in the revolutionary dogmas of natural rights and the equality of men, which had been strengthened by the impulse received from the French Revolution; the intense democratic spirit fostered by the frontier; the strength of the newly formed working classes living in the rapidly growing towns and cities; and the competition of political parties for voters.

The movement for manhood suffrage first appears in sections where the frontier element is influential. The states which entered the Union in the first decades of our national history came in with liberal suffrage provisions. With the growth of industrial towns and cities, and with the formation of a considerable wage-earning population, a farther impetus was given to the movement in favor of manhood suffrage. Property qualifications were not abolished in New Jersey until 1844; Connecticut took this step a year later. On the other hand, New York and Massachusetts abolished this requirement in 1821. The movement in this country antedated that of England. This may be explained, partially at least, by calling attention to the fact that England had no frontier element, and did have a very strongly entrenched landowning class. In Rhode Island, the frontier element was in a large measure lacking; the struggle of the forties in this little state was carried on by the wage earners of the

cities. This class triumphed earlier in Rhode Island than in England because the landowning class was less powerful in the former.

In the early history of the colonies a religious test had been required. "The religious test became less exacting in many instances, and finally broke down altogether on account of the great diversity of religious beliefs of the new immigrants, rendering it impossible to maintain a popular government under religious test."²⁸ If this argument of Professor Blackmar is tenable, it ought also to account for the removal of the property qualifications in the first half of the nineteenth century. During that period class differentiation increased, and the opposition between the rural and urban districts began to be clearly discernible.

The early agitation for woman's rights was largely a middle class affair. In 1830, Miss Frances Wright, the first "new woman" on American soil, started the first "woman's movement" in the United States. The early agitation was in a large measure directed toward obtaining for married women the right to own and control separate property. Until the latter part of the decade of the forties only one state, Louisiana, allowed married women separate property rights. But the recent movement for equal suffrage is actively supported by the socialist party, the Woman's Trade Union League and many trade unionists. The ballot placed in the hands of women

²⁸ Blackmar, *The Chautauquan*, vol. 22.

will tend to improve the conditions surrounding the wage-earning woman; and it may also be expected to lead toward better municipal housekeeping. The first, it is hoped, will aid in raising the wage level and the second in improving living conditions particularly in the sections of towns and cities where the wage earners live. Both considerations appeal to the male as well as to the female wage earner.

Communism and Coöperation. In the United States, these two movements have been largely middle class rather than working class movements. The one American working class communist worthy of mention is Thomas Skidmore. He established no communities but he presented a fairly definite scheme of social regeneration. Skidmore was the leader of the radical or agrarian wing of the divided Workingmen's Party of New York City. He was a machinist. At the time when Robert Dale Owen and many other reformers were vehemently proclaiming that free and universal education was an unfailing cure for all social ills, Thomas Skidmore in "The Right of Man to Property" (1829), declared that equal division of property was the first and most essential step. According to his plan, children from birth to maturity were to receive a sufficient amount from the state to provide "full and decent maintenance, according to age and condition." The famous American communistic experiments such as New Harmony, Brook Farm, and

the Icarian settlements, attracted but little attention from the American wage earner.

In this country the most successful coöperative establishments such as stores, creameries, and grain elevators, have been started and controlled by others than wage earners. An early American attempt at producers' coöperation is that of the Society of Journeymen Cabinet Makers of Philadelphia. In 1833, after labor disturbances, the members of this labor organization opened a warehouse for the sale of cabinet ware. In the wareroom, any member could place for sale work of his own. This institution closed its doors in 1834. But two or three years later there are evidences of an attempt on the part of the cabinet makers to start a general coöperative movement.²⁴ The molders of Cincinnati in 1848 and some tailors of Boston in 1849 organized coöperative establishments which continued for a brief period. The National Labor Union, in 1868, favored the establishment of coöperative stores and workshops. In the last years of the Civil War and soon after its close some ephemeral coöperative establishments were organized by unions. In the eighties the Knights of Labor also started a number of coöperative stores and a few coöperative manufacturing establishments. In 1916, reports indicate a promising coöperative-store movement among the coal miners of Illinois. The most

²⁴ Deibler, *The Amalgamated Wood Workers' International Union*, pp. 42, 43.

famous and successful of the American attempts at producers' coöperation is that of the coopers of Minneapolis. Gangs of longshoremen have also utilized producers' coöperation in a simple and very interesting manner.²⁵ The union divides the work among the different gangs; and each gang chooses its own leader or foreman. The latter collects the wages for the entire group and divides the amount equally among the members of the gang.

The Tariff. The first national issue upon which the wage earners of the country were appealed to by the politicians was that connected with a protective tariff. After the suffrage was extended so that wage earners became voters, the arguments in favor of, and adverse to, a protective tariff were so phrased as to appeal to the enfranchised workingmen. Before the wage earner gained the suffrage, protection was urged because of high wages paid to the American laborer; but after the wage earner became a voter the argument was quietly, quickly and adroitly modified. Protection to American industries was then demanded as a measure tending to keep wages high and thus to shelter the American worker from the competition of the cheap European laborer. This is the so-called "pauper labor" argument. Until after 1825, Congress exhibited little sympathy for the wage earner, but from that period down to the "full dinner-pail" ar-

²⁵ See Carlton, *History and Problems of Organised Labor*, pp. 221-222.

gument of recent fame, tariff discussions have usually been carried on in such a manner as to make a potent and tangible appeal to the toiler.

In 1831, the "New York Convention of Friends of Domestic Industry" urged that "our system tends directly to increase the effective power and remuneration of labor, thus multiplying the means, the comforts and enjoyments, of the laboring classes and raising them in the scale of civilization and social life." Webster in 1831 and again in 1833 favored a protective tariff because it offered advantages to American manual labor. Gallatin's *Memo-rial* in 1831 also touched on the benefit of the tariff to the wage earner. "The really important argument which protectionists had developed and exploited during the controversies of 1828, 1832-1833 and 1837 was the increased employment at remunerative wages which protection would afford. Undeniably many Eastern men desired to use protection as a means of preventing emigration and Western men hoped to build up manufactures to strengthen their home market, but the general principle as stated above remains true. . . . Although free traders were charged in 1832 with holding that the natural price of wages was the mere subsistence of the laborer, many of them had begun to believe in the importance and dignity of labor. It must not be forgotten that the chief free trade leaders were Southern men, accustomed to the atmosphere of slavery. Occasionally invidious comparisons be-

tween free and slave labor were made. Protectionists, on the other hand, were forced to recognize the upward pressure of the masses."²⁶

In the famous campaign of 1840, the Whigs appealed to the labor vote. Horace Greeley edited the *Log Cabin* during this campaign and frequently advocated a protective tariff. "The Whig idea was protection for the sake of capital. Greeley's idea was protection for the sake of labor. The Whigs did not approve of Greeley, but his theory was useful in 1840, and in that year they hired him to get out campaign literature."²⁷ Whig banners bearing the words, "No reduction of wages," were utilized in this campaign. Four years later, the Whig party favored "a tariff for revenue, to defray the necessary expenses of the Government, and which discriminated with special reference to the protection of the domestic labor of the country."²⁸

Dr. Mangold declares that by 1842 "many of its [the West's] leaders had joined the South against the protective policy which restricted migration to the new lands and in part sustained the efforts of the East to retain its growth." As long as much cheap western land remained, high wages were necessary to keep workers in industry,—otherwise they

²⁶ Mangold, *The Labor Argument in American Protective Tariff Discussion*, pp. 72, 74. See also p. 71.

²⁷ Commons, "Horace Greeley and the Working Class Origin of the Republican Party," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 24, p. 487.

²⁸ *New York Tribune*, May 11, 1844.

would go West and become pioneer farmers. The high wages argument for a protective tariff attracted the votes of the workingmen, tended to keep a supply of workers in the East and kept up prices. "Protection had been the stimulus the East demanded to accelerate her growth and retain her working population. Free land was [Secretary] Walker's remedy for diminishing wages but it implied the migration of the laborer to the West.²⁹ And this migration the East disliked until immigration from Europe provided a sufficient labor supply. Since the Civil War, the high rates of what was originally intended to be a temporary war tariff have been in a large measure retained. The constant reiteration of the pauper labor argument has apparently served its purpose exceedingly well.

Abolition of Imprisonment for Debt. Like most of our legal usages, political institutions and social customs, imprisonment for debt was English in its derivation. It was carried, as were the English common law and English political institutions, across the Atlantic by the colonial settlers, and firmly rooted in American soil. The general prevalence of this barbarous treatment of the unfortunate clearly indicates that it was not at that time deemed subversive of the fundamental principles of a republican form of government. This is, perhaps, as additional proof of the essentially nondemo-

²⁹ Mangold, *The Labor Argument in American Protective Tariff Discussion*, p. 102. Also, p. 105.

cratic basis of our government. The continuance of this practice after 1789 also furnishes evidence of the political predominance of the commercial interests of the nation. Originated in England in the reign of Henry III in order to benefit the nobility, extended under Edward I to the merchants, unless of Jewish extraction, after this class became important and powerful in England, this engine of class favoritism, built to strengthen the hands of the feudal lords, was utilized in a land nominally without classes and in an age after feudalism had been long extinct among English-speaking peoples.

The abolition of imprisonment for debt in the various states of the United States was another of the many humanitarian measures which were the fruits of the first two or three decades immediately following 1820. Before this step was taken it was necessary that the ballot be placed in the hands of the numerically increasing laboring class, and in the hands of the men of the frontier.

In 1829, it was estimated that no less than seventy-five thousand persons were annually imprisoned for debt in this land of the free; and at that date the practice had been abolished in at least two states,—the western states of Ohio and Kentucky. In 1830, the estimated number of individuals imprisoned for debt was in Massachusetts, 3,000; in New York, 10,000; in Pennsylvania, 7,000; in Maryland, 3,000; or a total of 23,000 in the four states. Individuals were imprisoned for very small

as well as for large debts; for debts when the debtor was absolutely unable to pay as well as for debts in regard to which an attempt was made to defraud the creditor. "In one city, forty cases were recorded in which the sum total of the debts was only twenty-three dollars, forty and one-fourth cents,—an average of less than sixty cents each." One of these cases was that of a man who was imprisoned thirty days because he owed two cents.

In some states, the debtor was not only denied the right to an opportunity to earn wages in order to pay his debts; but he was obliged, if he was an honest debtor, to depend upon charity for the necessities of life,—food, clothing, and fuel. Local humane societies often kept debtors from freezing or starving. A criminal was given even greater consideration in regard to food and fuel than was accorded the imprisoned debtor. The practice of imprisoning debtors fell, of course, with peculiar severity upon those who were close to the poverty line, that is, upon the wage-earning classes.

Four classes of people were particularly interested in the question of the abolition of imprisonment for debt: The wage earners; tradesmen and money lenders; the class of lawyers who received fees from cases involving the imprisonment of debtors; and the humanitarians. The practice was regarded as a relic of barbarism. It was urged that to imprison debtors was contrary to the accepted theories regarding natural rights and the equality

of men. This was the sentimental or humanitarian argument. The second kind of argument was economic. Imprisonment for debt increased pauperism and was not efficient as a means of collecting debts. The wage-earning classes were in favor of the abolition of the practice because some of them were desirous of escaping from the payment of debts, because they feared its effect in the time of unemployment or of ill-health, or because they were afraid of arbitrary action on the part of creditors. Nearly all of the resolutions adopted at the numerous mass meetings of workingmen held in the latter part of the decade of the twenties and the first half of the thirties contain clauses demanding the abolition of imprisonment for debt. The labor journals of that period were also uniformly opposed to the practice. The ephemeral labor parties made the abolition of imprisonment for debt a plank in their platforms. Tammany, the Democratic party organization of New York City, became interested in this reform when it saw the necessity of getting the labor vote. In 1831, an act was passed in New York abolishing imprisonment for debt except in cases of fraud. The workingmen carried on an active agitation in regard to this matter in several Northern states.

The humanitarian leaders took an active part in the agitation in favor of this reform. The tradesmen and money lenders usually aligned themselves in opposition although they were touched by the argument that imprisonment was an inefficient

means of collecting bad debts. The most stalwart and uncompromising friends of imprisonment for debt were the petty lawyers whose pockets were being lined with fees. The dislike of lawyers manifested by the workingmen of the period was no doubt in a measure due to the prevalence of evils connected with the practice now under consideration. By 1840, imprisonment for debt had been abolished in practically every Northern state. This reform was accomplished by means of the steady, effective pressure of the newly enfranchised and rapidly growing laboring class, aided and led by the humanitarian element. The active reactionary forces consisted chiefly of wealthy creditors, tradesmen, and petty lawyers. Other classes seem, as a rule, to have assumed a position of neutrality.²⁰

²⁰ Carlton, *Yale Review*, 1908, vol. 17, pp. 339-344.

CHAPTER VIII

LABOR PARTIES, SOCIALISM, DIRECT ACTION, AND THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT

Separate labor parties could not, of course, make their appearance before the suffrage had been extended until practically all adult men could vote. In the first flush of their newly acquired political power, it was to be expected that the workers in the cities would turn to a new class party in order to remove the cause of their many grievances. The first labor or workingmen's party appeared in the city of Philadelphia in 1827. It was closely followed by one in New York City and another in Massachusetts. The pioneer labor party of Philadelphia held the balance of power in two elections and some of its candidates were endorsed by the older parties. "Even the Congressional candidates of the older parties flung out their banners as the 'true working men's party,' and appropriated the slogan of '6 to 6,' which the workingmen had used to indicate their demand for the ten hour day." The party disappeared within three years.¹

¹ Commons, "Labor Organizations and Labor Politics," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1907, vol. 21, p. 326.

New York City affords the best ground for the study of the political activity of the workingmen of 1829 and 1830. There the political situation was more complex than elsewhere, and in that city leaders were readily found. The new and somewhat unique party passed rapidly through various phases corresponding quite closely to the type of men who temporarily dominated it and directed its policy. These phases may be termed agrarianism, humanitarianism or educational communism, and fusion with various political factions.² At first, Thomas Skidmore, the agrarian, was in control; but the leadership of Skidmore was of short duration. In his place appeared a new set of leaders. These were Miss Frances Wright, the famous woman agitator; Robert Dale Owen and George H. Evans, the editor of the newly established labor paper, *The Working Man's Advocate*. Education, rather than equal distribution of property, became the slogan of the party.

After the election of 1829, it became plainly apparent to the leaders of the old parties that here was a new political power which must be conciliated and absorbed, or split up and diverted into various channels. The methods employed were three in number: (1) Dissensions were fomented within the new party; (2) skilled politicians affiliated with it;

² For a more detailed study see Carlton, "The Workingmen's Party of New York City, 1829-1831," *Political Science Quarterly*, 1907, vol. 22, pp. 401-415.

and (3) the old parties indorsed certain policies and candidates of the workingmen.

No pleasant theory in regard to the good old times should be allowed to obscure the facts. Indeed, at this period in our history, politics was already an art. Its methods were cruder and more direct than those employed by politicians of a more recent date. Violence was more common and bribery more open. The hobnail rather than the gumshoe was used. On the other hand, the rank and file of the voters were less experienced; and, consequently, they were more easily gulled by specious promises and plausible programs. Martin Van Buren, who nationalized "the Machine," was "learning the ropes," and Tammany Hall was an organized power in New York politics. In 1830, a New York newspaper cynically declared: "The Tammany grinding machine has turned out the following names, which all who hold offices, or ever expect to get any, are ordered to vote as the Assembly ticket."

The first step toward the formation of a workingmen's party in New York City was taken at a meeting of "mechanics and others" held in that city on the evening of April 23, 1829. At that time in New York City many artisans were working only ten hours per day; but the employers of the city wished to lengthen the working day. At this meeting of workingmen and others resolutions were adopted demanding the retention of the ten hour day. The party organization was not, however,

perfected until about six months later. By that time evidently the ten hour question had been satisfactorily settled. At a meeting held on October 19, 1829, resolutions were adopted condemning the private ownership of land, the hereditary transmission of wealth, banking privileges, chartered monopolies, auction sales and the exemption of church property from taxation, and favoring a mechanics' lien law and the abolition of imprisonment for debt. A preliminary report laid stress upon the desirability of a scheme of communal education. Skidmore was the chairman of this meeting; and the resolutions against private ownership of land and against inheritance of property were doubtless inserted at his behest.

In the fall election of 1829 the new party nominated a full list of candidates for the Assembly. Its nominees were *bona fide* workingmen: two machinists, two carpenters, a brassfounder, a whitesmith, a cooper, a painter, a grocer and a physician. One of the candidates, Ebenezer Ford, was elected. Two others, both radical agrarians, received nearly as many votes each as Ford. The party also named candidates for the State Senate, but these were defeated.

The first split in the party was on the subject of agrarianism. Skidmore's extreme views as to the equalization of property could not long be countenanced. Only a handful adhered to the policies of Skidmore; these formed the agrarian wing of the

party. Humanitarian enthusiasm was now dominant; and equal republican education was now held up as the panacea for all the social and economic ills which then afflicted the American people. For a brief period this became the most important plank in the party's platform.

The new leaders of the Workingmen's party devoted themselves chiefly to the propaganda of equal, republican education. All children were to be fed, clothed and lodged at public expense; all were to dress alike and eat at a common table. Give such a training, said Robert Dale Owen, to a boy until he is twenty-one years of age, and division of property is not important. It was an idealistic and Platonian scheme; but enthusiasm and idealistic dreams cannot long support and maintain a political party. Something more substantial and immediate is necessary. The unexpected strength of the workingmen's movement, as disclosed by the November elections, aroused the Tammany leaders. Tammany saw the value of such a slogan as "the workingmen's friend"; and many designing politicians saw a golden opportunity to manipulate the workingmen's party for their own private and selfish ends. A newspaper friendly to the wage earners warned them: "Trust not too implicitly to sudden friendships. Beware of moneyed and professional influence."

Education was the issue on which a second division appeared within the party. A conservative fac-

tion pictured the communal or boarding school method of education as inimical to the American home. In the fall of 1830, three workingmen's tickets were put in the field. The Owen, the Skidmore and the conservative faction, each placed a state ticket in the field; consequently, the Democrats won a complete victory in the city and in the State. This election marks the end of the Workingmen's party. There are traces of its existence in 1831; but after that year even its fragments drop out of sight. About five years later some of these fragments reappear in the Loco-Foco or Equal Rights party; but this party was less radical than the Workingmen's party.

In the development of the Workingmen's party we can clearly discern the potent influence of the narrow, enthusiastic or fanatical leader. Utilizing the discontent of his followers, he leads them into new and unanticipated paths. The workingmen were controlled, as the mass of a party is always controlled, not by reflection and logical reasoning, but by emotion. They believed that they were wronged and oppressed. Skidmore and Owen each presented a perfectly simple and tangible program, and for a time each carried the party with him. The new and radical party met vigorous opposition. The bitterness of the attack may be pictured when it is recalled that the members were denounced as agrarians, infidels, atheists, "the dregs of the earth, the very slime and scum of society."

Several important concrete results came from the activity of this ephemeral and class conscious political organization. The passage of a mechanics' lien law and the abolition of imprisonment for debt were hastened. More money was appropriated in New York City for educational purposes. The spectacular trade union movement of the thirties, noting the downfall of the party, avoided the pitfalls of political activity. In fact, the tradition that labor organizations, if they would avoid early and rapid disintegration, must stand aloof from all political movements—a tradition which in recent years has lost much of its authority—seems to have originated, so far as this country is concerned, in the failure of the labor parties of 1827-1831.

The Workingmen's party seems to have made its first appearance in Massachusetts in 1830. In 1833, in Lowell, a full ticket was put in the field. The party, however, never attained much strength in Massachusetts. "Where mention of the party is found it is almost invariably coupled with discussions of the hours of labor and the education of the working classes."⁸ Outside of New York City and Philadelphia, the Workingmen's party was probably not purely a party of wage earners. In Boston, its appeal was made to "laboring men, mechanics, tradesmen, farmers, and others standing upon the same level." This party appeared later in Boston than in Philadelphia and New York City, but it con-

⁸ Persons, *Labor Laws and Their Enforcement*, p. 11.

tinued in existence after the other city organizations had vanished.

After the disappearance of these ephemeral and local parties, no labor party worthy of the name arose until after the close of the Civil War. However, Horace Greeley in 1845 called attention to a "new party styled 'National Reformers' " which was "composed of like materials and in good part of the same men with the old 'Working Men's Party.' " *

When the Civil War ended labor organizations of the trade union type were multiplying and waxing stronger, The return of the soldiers to peaceful pursuits, the continued influx of immigrants from the old world, and the growing power of industrial combinations, all contributed to arouse the wage earners of the nation to activity. The years 1866 and 1867 probably represent the period of maximum activity during the era immediately following the surrender at Appomattox. In 1864, an unsuccessful attempt had been made to organize a national federation of trade unions. Two years later the National Labor Union was organized at a National Labor Congress held in Baltimore. This was the first successful national federation of trade unions formed since the National Trades Union disappeared in 1837. From its inception, political activity seems to have been an important part of the work of the National Labor Union. In fact, the

* *New York Tribune*, October 17, 1845. See *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, vol. 8, p. 41.

chief aim and purpose of the organization was political rather than purely industrial.

The first Congress or annual convention of the National Labor Union in 1866 recommended that steps be taken to form a national labor party "which shall be put in operation as soon as possible." A year later it was resolved that the time had arrived when "the industrial classes should cut themselves aloof from party ties and predilections and organize themselves into a National Labor Party." And again in 1868 a resolution was adopted which stated that "the very existence of the National Labor Union depends upon the immediate organization of an independent labor party." No definite steps seem to have been taken to carry these resolutions into effect until 1871. As early as 1866, Cameron, the editor of *The Workingman's Advocate*, perhaps the leading labor paper of the period and the official organ of the National Labor Union, was nominated as a candidate for a seat in the lower house of the Illinois legislature by the workingmen of Chicago. The editor of the *National Workman*, the official paper of the federated trades of New York City, wrote at the opening of the following year: "The New Year opens with flattering auspices to the cause of Labor Reform. Many Governors of States and members of State Legislatures have been elected upon Workingmen's tickets, as friends of the eight hour system." In 1867, at least three states, New York, Connecticut and Michigan, held

workingmen's conventions; and a National Labor Reform party was organized. In a platform adopted August 22, 1867, it opposed land monopoly, the national banking system and the "money monopoly" which was held to be "the parent of all monopolies." The issuance of treasury notes was favored as a preventative of growing inequality in the distribution of wealth; and workers were urged to take up public lands and become actual settlers. This party undoubtedly died soon after its birth because William H. Sylvis, upon being elected president of the National Labor Union in 1868, urged the organization of a Workingman's party and the Congress held by the union voted to organize a "Labor Reform Party."

By the time of the third Congress of the National Labor Union in 1868, that organization "had commenced to exert some political influence and politicians were beginning to court its power."⁵ Many workingmen opposed the formation of a separate labor party because of strong partisan prejudices. Other unionists, "who had been toadied and petted by politicians because of their power with the workingmen, saw that power waning"; and they opposed a separate party. On the other hand, in 1870, the National Labor Union issued an address declaring that the whole country was under "the supreme control of bankers, moneyed men and professional politicians"; and the Union's Congress voted

⁵ Sylvis, *Biography of William H. Sylvis*, p. 75.

to take independent political action throughout the country. The workers did not, however, rally to the support of the labor candidates who were nominated. After the election, the editor of one of the labor papers declared with some bitterness that the labor reform candidates who were "for the most part representative trade unionists," had been overwhelmingly defeated by the workers themselves.

The authority to issue a call for a national political convention was placed in the hands of a committee. This call, issued early in 1871, is worthy of brief notice. It confidently asserted that capital was master in the United States; and capital had obtained its favorable and dominating position because of the existence of monopolies—banking, money, traction, manufacturing, land, commercial and grain. The outcry against land monopoly was now directed against land grants to railways. The fear of a banking monopoly was old; but consolidated railways, manufacturing, commercial and grain monopolies were new enemies. The call favored the regulation or abolishment of corporate monopolies.

A labor reform party was organized in Massachusetts in 1869; and in that year it elected twenty-one representatives to the State Assembly and one State Senator. The state ticket polled 13,000 votes. In the following year, Wendell Phillips was nominated for governor. The party advocated the separation of industrial from political questions. Two

new and significant demands are found in the platform: (1) The regulation of railway rates; (2) the abolition of the importation of laborers, particularly from China under contract. In 1871, the resolutions presented by Phillips and adopted by the labor reform party were tinged with socialism. It was affirmed that labor is the creator of all wealth; the abolition of special privileges was demanded; and it was asserted that the capitalistic system was making the rich richer and the poor poorer.* An attempt was made in 1872 to put a national ticket in the field. In 1874, Independent Reform candidates were nominated in Illinois and, perhaps, elsewhere.

Undoubtedly many members of the National Labor Union who were committed to political action and opposed to the so-called "money monopoly" became members of the Greenback party. Other workers who were more radical turned to the socialist organization known at first as the Workingmen's Party of the United States. In short, the small but aggressive and class conscious element within the National Labor Union joined the latter party, while the portion standing for reform affiliated with the Greenback party. The Greenbackers seem to have been much more closely related to anarchism than to socialism. As a matter of fact the American workingman of the generation imme-

*Carlton, *The History and Problems of Organized Labor*, p. 61.

diately following the Civil War was still saturated with the philosophy of the frontier or of Jacksonian democracy. He as yet adhered to the belief that each and every American wage earner had an excellent opportunity to become a small proprietor or even a captain of industry. As long as this remained true, it was not difficult for "pure and simple" trade unionism generated during a period of stress and of rising prices like the last years of the Civil War to be gradually transmuted into "labor reformism" and "greenbackism." The Knights of Labor was primarily a reform association; and the ultimate aim of its leaders during its years of growth was some form of a coöperative commonwealth.

In the eighties, several ephemeral labor reform parties appear, for example, the Union Labor party, United Labor party, Progressive Labor party, American Reform party, Homesteaders, Anti-Monopolists. The Union Labor party seems to have been dominated chiefly by former Greenbackers. In 1888, it polled nearly 150,000 votes. The United Labor party was an outgrowth of the movement in New York City headed by Henry George. These parties merged into the Populist party two years later. None of these parties, however, were purely wage earners' organizations. They opposed land monopoly and the national banking system; and they favored governmental ownership of telegraphs and railways. Although these so-called labor parties could gain only a small following, labor

organizations were growing. Labor was sloughing off its reformism and returning to the "pure and simple" type of trade unionism. By the close of the eighties, it was evidently becoming more and more difficult to lead the wage earners into the camp of the reformers. The new labor leaders, of whom Samuel Gompers became the most influential, placed little emphasis upon political action, coöperation or middle class idealism.

The efforts of the wage earners of California to form separate labor parties are worthy of brief notice. A Workingmen's party was organized in 1867, and almost immediately achieved some notable successes. But it was short-lived. A historian of California labor legislation believes that "undoubtedly this show of political strength was one of the chief factors contributing to the passage of the eight hour law, the mechanics' lien law, and the act for the protection of wages, at the 1868 session of the legislature." Again in the seventies, the political activities of the wage earners became important. Among the significant demands made by the Workingmen's party of the decade of the seventies was for the restriction of Chinese immigration, land reform, an eight hour day and the abolition of the contract labor system of prison labor. The workingmen elected about one third of the members of the constitutional convention of 1878, and exerted a potent influence in formulating the new State Constitution. The party soon disappeared.

Following the teamsters' strike in San Francisco in 1901, a Labor Union party secured control of the municipal government of that city. For four years this local party was strong; but it was shattered as a result of disclosures of graft affecting the Mayor and other city officials.⁷

All the American labor parties formed during the nineteenth century were ephemeral; and the labor organizations which went into politics almost uniformly suffered as a consequence. Most labor organizations cling to an opportunist policy. They aim at obtaining immediate and individual benefits in the form of higher wages and better working conditions. Political action brings in slower returns and the benefits to be derived from such action are more widely distributed. Consequently, the entrance of labor organizations into the political field signifies that the old business policies involving wage bargaining, strikes and boycotts are losing their potency.⁸ With the exception of the Socialist and Socialist Labor parties, in recent years no separate labor parties have been organized. The American Federation of Labor, founded in 1881, has never emphasized political activity. Within the last eight or ten years, however, the Federation which now has a membership of over three million, has ventured

⁷ Eaves, *History of California Labor Legislation*, pp. 19, 27-39, 75-81.

⁸ Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, p. 471.

into the forbidden political field in order to obtain legislation demanded by the wage workers of the nation.

The method as worked out by President Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor is not to organize a separate labor party but to swing the vote of organized labor to the party or the candidate promising to support the legislative measures demanded by organized labor. The leaders of the Federation aim to take advantage of every opportunity which promises tangible results for the mass of the workers. "Organized labor must see to it that trade union men are nominated and elected to municipal, county and state offices; that trade union men represent its interests in the State Legislatures and in Congress.

Let organized labor's slogan live in its deeds—
Stand faithfully by our friends,
Oppose and defeat our enemies, whether they be
Candidates for President,
For Congress or other offices, whether
Executive, Legislative, or Judicial.
Get Busy. Stand True."*

The advocates of this conservative policy assert that the American Federation of Labor is not partisan to a political party but to a principle. In 1908, Mr. Gompers as President of the Federation favored the Democratic party; in 1912, that party or the Na-

* *American Federationist*, November, 1912.

tional Progressive party. In his report to the annual convention in 1912, President Gompers presented some interesting statistics as to labor men in the United States Congress. In 1906, six labor men were elected to the House of Representatives; in 1908, these were reelected and four more union card men were chosen. In 1910, fifteen labor men were elected. One of these, W. B. Wilson, became the chairman of the House Committee on Labor; and, in 1913, he was appointed Secretary of Labor by President Wilson.

The Report of the Proceedings of the Convention of the American Federation of Labor held in 1913 contains the following statement regarding union men in the Sixty-third Congress. "Sixteen members of the House of Representatives are union men with full paid-up union cards. Several members carry honorary cards in trade unions, and a large number of Representatives are openly sympathetic with the objects and aims of the organizations of labor. The Senate apparently contains more members sympathetic to Labor's aims than was formerly the case; one Senator carries a union card and one other possesses an honorary membership card." The "labor group" in the Sixty-fourth Congress numbered eighteen representatives and one Senator. Nevertheless, many unionists have questioned the efficacy of this method, and are asserting that little has actually been accomplished which is of prime importance to the wage earners of the country.

Ely Moore, a "printer orator," was the first trade union man to enter Congress. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1834 from New York City. Moore was a Democrat and was supported by Tammany Hall. He was reelected in 1836 and defeated in 1838. On February 4, 1839, this representative of organized labor spoke against the reception of petitions praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. He also opposed the establishment of a national bank. Ely Moore was one of the presidents of the first national federation of labor organizations,—the National Trades' Union which held conventions in 1834, 1835 and 1836.

As has been stated, the early socialist or communist movement in the United States was a middle class rather than a working class movement. Thomas Skidmore, the agrarian, was the first real American socialist agitator. Robert Owen was an Englishman. The next American socialist agitator was Albert Brisbane, a follower of the Frenchman, Fourier. At the time when Robert Owen and many other reformers were proclaiming that free and universal education was a cure for all social ills, Skidmore declared that equal division of property was the first and most essential step. Fourierism was introduced into this country soon after the panic of 1837 by Albert Brisbane, Horace Greeley, Charles A. Dana and others; and many Fourierist communities were formed.

Real working class socialism did not appear until after the close of the Civil War. During the years immediately following the War, it was fostered chiefly through German influence. The "German period of socialism in the United States" ended about 1876. In that year several organizations of socialists were united to form the Workingmen's party of the United States. One year later the name was changed to Socialist Labor party. At first the Socialist Labor party advised its members not to take part in political campaigns; and, although interested in several local campaigns, especially in New York City and Chicago, it did not put a presidential candidate in the field until 1892. In 1886, this party in the city of New York united with the single taxers and certain labor organizations to support Henry George for Mayor on the United Labor ticket. The local Socialist Labor party in Chicago polled about 12,000 votes in the city election of 1879 and elected three aldermen. It was soon broken into factions.

Although the Socialist Labor party has made its appeal directly to the working class, its support has been inconsiderable. In 1896, its candidate for President polled a little more than 36,000 votes; and in 1908, about 15,000. A split in the party occurred and in 1900 the Socialist party held its first convention. The Socialist party has been somewhat more successful than the Socialist Labor party. In 1916, the former represented a fairly coherent

and class conscious group of working people. The latter commands the votes of only a few thousand workers. One of the chief points of difference between these two radical parties is in regard to the attitude taken toward organizations of labor. The Socialist Labor party insists that trade or craft unionism must be condemned and urges workers to organize into industrial unions. The Socialist party while favorable to industrial unionism has not condemned the trade union type of organization. The Socialist party stands for industrial democracy and opposes special privileges of all kinds.

In 1911, there were over four hundred socialist officeholders in the United States. These were scattered through thirty-three states and represented about one hundred and sixty municipalities and election districts. In 1910, one socialist was elected to Congress; but, in 1912, none were elected. In 1914, and again in 1916, another socialist was sent to the House of Representatives. In 1908, the socialist candidate for President received nearly 450,000 votes; in 1912, nearly 900,000; and, in 1916, approximately 600,000. In 1917, the party was split on the question of the entrance of the United States into the war. Many prominent socialists left the party because it had been committed to an anti-war program which was interpreted to mean a pro-German bias. If our traditional two-party arrangement continues, there is offered in the near future little hope of political success for the socialists. But,

if this system breaks up and the American situation approximates that in European nations, the socialists may have a new opportunity. The Republican party of 1916 was an aggregation of quite divergent interests; and the Democratic party was far from homogeneous. A several-party system in the United States is by no means an impossibility.

From time to time, anti-political, semianarchistic or direct action movements appear. The Owenite and the Chartist movements in England were of this type. In France syndicalism emphasizes direct action. The so-called anarchist movement of the eighties which culminated in the Haymarket riot in Chicago, was an American manifestation of this type of labor agitation. At the present time the anti-political or direct action phase of the labor movement in the United States is represented by the Chicago branch of the Industrial Workers of the World.

The Industrial Workers of the World is an industrial union saturated with revolutionary ideals. It was organized in 1905, and soon after was split into two factions as the result of a bitter internal dissension. The Detroit branch emphasizes the importance of organization on the political as well as on the industrial field. The Chicago branch asserts that the political state is a middle class instrument built up to maintain and continue small scale industry and competition. According to these revolutionists, real power to-day is to be found on the industrial field. The Industrial Workers of the

World stand firmly for no compromise with the employing or capitalist class; it is aggressively hostile to the present order. "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." Not a fair day's work for a fair wage, but the abolition of capitalism and of the wage system is their insistent demand. By the Industrial Workers, according to one of its adherents, "communistic and co-operative associations, consumers' leagues, grangers' unions, larger union funds, identity of interests' discipline, contracts, old age pensions, stock sharing, civic federations, and, not the least, political suffrage and 'political action,' were once and for all, weighed and found wanting."

Social reform, progressivism, patriotism, idealism, the emancipation of women, all isms and cults, are scornfully waved aside. Militancy, "one big union," the general strike—these are things worth while. Evolution or step by step progress is useless or worse than useless. "In the birth of the I. W. W. great clarification of revolutionary purpose is evidenced." This militant organization will not tolerate "jockeying with passing innovations"; it has, according to its followers, thrust down to a "bed-rock basis." These enthusiastic and individualistic revolutionists are the products of modern large scale machine industry and the antagonism between labor and capital which has manifested itself from time to time on both the industrial and the political field. Many of the members of the

Chicago Industrial Workers of the World are also members of the Socialist party; but their opposition to political action and their hatred of the state indicates that they should be classed as anarchists. The Detroit Industrial Workers, now called the Workers' International Industrial Union, is closely connected with the Socialist Labor party; it looks upon political action as possessing only a destructive or negative character. With the downfall of capitalism the mission of political action will be ended. After the social revolution is an accomplished fact, both branches apparently agree that the industrial field alone will be of significance.

The Industrial Workers of the World insist that the capitalistic state can never give the workers a square deal; its class origin makes such a consummation an improbable outcome. They pin their faith on a new and democratic industrial state in which representation is to be by industries controlled by the workers. The Workers' International Industrial Union, on the other hand, proposes to organize the workers politically "along class conscious lines" and in this fashion finally "to capture the government by constitutional means."

In order to understand the "progressive movement" of recent years, its historical background must be hastily sketched. It presents many features similar to those of the humanitarian movement of the forties and fifties. The humanitarian leaders of this early period wished to continue the old,

worn-out, semipaternalistic methods of domestic economy into modern industrial and city life. They saw the then existing evils of woman and child labor, pauperism, juvenile crime, intemperance and unemployment; they were strongly impressed by the disintegrating effects, upon the family, of crowded city and town life; and they magnified and glorified the desirable features of the earlier form of domestic industry with its intimate personal relations between workers and employers. The hurry and hustle of business and the keenness of the race for profits offended and shocked them; and no golden stream was finding its way into their pockets to obscure or distort their vision of conditions, past and present. The humanitarian leaders of the forties and fifties saw a new class of men rising to control not merely the wealth but the political and social affairs of the state and nation. They were animated by very different ideals and motives from those which appealed to this new economic and social class. These two classes were instinctively antagonistic. The humanitarians of this early period more or less unconsciously joined hands with the newborn labor movement.¹⁰

Since the Civil War, Americans have lauded their captains of industry and millionaires. The ardent youth has been influenced to take these men as his

¹⁰ Carlton, *Economic Influences upon Educational Progress in the United States, 1820-1850*, pp. 41-42; Carlton, "Humanitarianism, Past and Present," *International Journal of Ethics*, vol. 17, p. 48.

guides. He has hoped to travel the same route they have traveled. Corporate interests have attracted the most ambitious and self-reliant young men into their service. And too often big business has muffled the voices of those who were so eagerly and hopefully pressing forward distinction and "success." But gradually this well-known path toward personal independence and material prosperity has become narrower and more difficult for the newcomer to tread. The giant corporation while luring the many, plants insurmountable obstacles in front of all but a chosen few. The western frontier line faded; land and natural resources were bound to a few by firm legal ties; the multimillionaire appeared. And the era of the much lauded self-made man practically closed. A large percentage of the wealth and the control of a larger percentage of the wealth of the nation were at the end of the first decade of the present century in the hands of a small minority of the people. The small and medium sized businesses were quite generally absorbed or controlled by big industrial and commercial units. The members of the wage-earning and middle classes were debarred from the prospect of large incomes. The force of circumstances in the form of industrial evolution thrust wealth aside as a significant ideal of American manhood. The road for the many to the familiar goal was blocked. The vividness and attractiveness of the old, sordid, individualistic ideal perforce faded, and another higher

up, but accessible, was seen gradually to brighten and take form. This was not the goal of wealth but that of the conservation and mobilization of human and natural resources. Social justice became the slogan of a multitude of young men and women. The conditions were ripe for an insurgent uprising; and the so-called progressive movement appeared. And the war has aided in making real democracy the stirring slogan of the rank and file of the American people.

The "progressives" of the years immediately preceding the War were composed of at least two quite distinct types of men. The first class represented the new middle class—salaried workers, farmers, small business men, certain professional men receiving fees rather than salaries, and skilled wage earners. Many progressives of this type possessed characteristics very similar to those exhibited by the humanitarian leaders of the pre-Civil War period. This wing of the Progressives protested against the control of government by large business interests. These men had witnessed the crushing of many small and medium sized business enterprises by large corporations. The opportunity for "business initiative" seemed from their point of view to be vanishing. They demanded control of governmental machinery for the purpose of retarding or of turning the course of industrial evolution. Like their predecessors, the humanitarians of the forties and

fifties, they were interested in bettering the condition of the workingman.

Doubtless in the future this class of progressives must be reckoned with. Their strength, however, was negative rather than positive; it was found in protest rather than in a definite program of industrial and social betterment. The rapid progress of technical inventions seems likely to destroy the value of the skill and training of many skilled wage earners and salaried persons. From the adding machine and the tabulator in the bank and the counting-room to the glass-bottle blowing machine in the glass factory, machinery is displacing the labor of skilled mental and manual laborers. The relative number of unskilled and routine workers is doubtless on the increase. This change will tend to undermine the middle class, which means strengthening the socialist party rather than the progressive group. The increase in the number of tenant farmers and the changes taking place in retail business—the attempts to eliminate the middlemen—point in the same direction.

The second group of progressives was led by certain well-known big business men who were primarily interested in an efficient, well-trained and contented labor force. Mr. Roosevelt's program was quite satisfactory to this group. His program looked toward state socialism or "benevolent feudalism." It was proposed to control industry through commissions. The commissions were to determine

such matters as wages and conditions of labor, fair profits and reasonable prices. The right of wage workers to organize and to strike was not definitely and unreservedly affirmed. Industrial justice was promised; but its definition was evidently to be framed by the friends of big and small business rather than by organized or unorganized wage workers. Certain shrewd and far-seeing big-business leaders skillfully directed the movement. They wished to dilute radicalism and to soothe the restless insurgents by ameliorating conditions. They stood firmly for benevolent feudalism in the guise of state socialism. A striking parallel is found in the social policy which Bismarck carried out in Germany. The events of 1916 indicated that, like many other third parties, the Progressive party as a distinct organization had run its course; and the Democratic party seems to have taken over considerable portions of the progressive program. It is also quite clear that many members of the Progressive party followed a leader or a slogan or a shibboleth rather than a definite set of principles. Of this, the collapse of the party after Mr. Roosevelt declined the nomination in 1916 offers unmistakable evidence.

In October, 1917, at a "conference of radical and progressive groups," a "National party" was organized. The aim of this new party is to amalgamate the socialist group which favors the war policy of our government, the single taxers, the pro-

hibitionists, "most of the principal radical elements heretofore in the Progressive party, together with various trade union and other radical elements" which "are working hand in hand to advance the principles of fundamental democracy." The platform of the party contains many planks which appeal to the members of labor organizations; but the roster of officials does not contain the name of any prominent labor leader. The new organization is clearly not a "labor" party. In 1919, a "committee of forty-eight" was organized to crystallize the sentiment of "liberal and independent voters of the forty-eight states."

CHAPTER IX

THE IDEALS OF THE WAGE EARNER

Throughout history the workers—slaves, serfs, indentured servants and wage earners—have ever constituted a depressed class. They have never been the recipients of special privileges or of unique advantages. Living in this depressed or subordinate position generation after generation has impressed upon the workers certain definite ideals, good and bad. In this class, charity in its true sense as contrasted with the condescension of philanthropy, has attained its highest development. Sympathy—feeling with—is a marked trait among those who are struggling close to the poverty line.¹ And from time to time ample proof has been given of the existence of working class solidarity. Chaucer, in his portrayal of the English serf or peasant of the last of the fourteenth century, pictures this humble medieval worker as never refusing to help his weaker comrades. The English worker of five hundred years ago exhibited the same high ideals of self-denial and of sympathy which the charity workers of to-day often find in the most unattractive

¹ Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, c. 2.

sections of our great industrial cities. The brotherhood of man was no abstract theory to the English peasant of 1381; rather was it a living concrete practice. "When Adam delved and Eve span," they asked, "who then was the gentleman?"

But to the aggressive and proud landowning baron no clear vision of human brotherhood, or of the golden rule universalized, was given. The creed of the baron was "might makes right"; and "to the strong belongs the earth and the products thereof," was their title deed. To the baron, the feudal landlord, the merchant, the manufacturer, the professional man—in short, to the nobility and the middle class—of preceding generations, brotherhood has been a pleasant theory or something eminently desirable for others to practice.

Because they have been a depressed and non-privileged class, from time to time the workers as a group have raised their voices against political corruption and the oppression by the ruling elements in the nation. The cry of the Saxon serf in Norman England as illustrated in the songs of the period is not dissimilar to that of the modern wage earner. For example, listen to the serf of the fourteenth century. "All the land of England is moist with weeping . . . The fraud of the rulers prevails; peace is trodden under foot. Right and law lie asleep. . . . The wealth of the rich is increased by exacting gifts; almost all nobles spend their time in contriving evil; the mad esquires de-

light in malice. Lo! the rapacious men appear on every side." ² This plaintive cry may be compared with the somewhat more vigorous way in which the leaders of the American wage earners have voiced their hatred of political rottenness. "It is a sad day for the people when such rottenness prevails in the Senate; when knavery rules the House; when pampered debility occupies the presidential chair, and cabinets are composed of corrupt politicians or political ingrates. . . . The laboring man of to-day in America, whatever he may be theoretically, is practically a *pariah* and a slave, at the mercy of corrupt swindlers, under the guise of respectable capitalists." ³

From time to time, American workingmen have also raised their voices, but quite ineffectually, in favor of the simplification of our legal system. They have protested against the legal technicalities which American lawyer legislators have delighted in inserting into the statutes and the rules governing court procedure. They have also protested against the emphasis which the legal mind places upon precedent because precedent is necessarily a handicap upon any class struggling upward toward a plane of equality with other classes.

The English peasants of a few centuries ago "were not a people broken up into atoms by compe-

² Quoted from Collins, *Land Reform*, p. 110, by Heath, *Contemporary Review*, July, 1907.

³ *Workingman's Advocate*, June 19, 1869.

tition and the little jealousies resulting therefrom, but a people who had learned to feel and act as one body, having a common interest, a common tradition, common rights and a common ideal of justice." ⁴ The working class, whether slave, serf or wage-earning, has never been characterized by the extreme individualistic atomism so often deeply marked upon the character of the ruling or of the middle class. The conditions existing in pre-Civil War America tended, however, to produce an excess of individualism among the wage earners; but since the War the pendulum has been slowly swinging backward toward the normal.

For the United States, at least, the opening years of the twentieth century were vibrant with humanitarian ideals, with theories of social justice and of the brotherhood of man. "The old order changeth." The apathy which the world has ever manifested toward poverty, disease, crime and degradation was in no small degree dissipated; and men eagerly looked forward to the time when poverty, the slum and overwork would be driven from the land. Multitudes of organizations devoted to human betterment came into being. Men of different classes spent time, energy and money in various forms of social service. What was the potent cause of this manifestation of social ardor? Was it due solely to the enthusiasm of a few unique and far-seeing individuals; or was the cause to be discerned in

⁴ Heath, *Contemporary Review*, July, 1907, pp. 92-93.

changes modifying the points of view and the ambitions of many individuals? Hitherto, Americans have been busy developing the natural resources of this great nation and in bringing the virgin soil of our plains and valleys under cultivation. Now, the good land is nearly all privately owned, the small business has been, in no small measure, displaced by the great corporation with its subdivision of labor, gradation of employees, and lockstep methods of promotion.

As was indicated in the preceding chapter, the old familiar paths to the traditional American goals of independent business enterprise have been blocked. The fierceness of unrestrained competition is being gradually softened; and the old sordid ideals seem faded and gray in comparison with the new and shining ideal of social, national and international service. The industrial evolution which is rapidly forcing the middle class into the ranks of the salaried men and tenants is slowly but surely inducing this class to accept some of the time honored ideals of the wage earners. Men of to-day succeed not so much by struggling single-handed and alone as by coöperation, combination, association and united effort. The strong, self-reliant, self-centered and self-absorbed individual can no longer rise from poverty to a position of power and affluence; and public opinion no longer approves of his methods or ideals.

The American youth of to-day's middle class is

dreaming of visions which are quite different from those of his grandfather and father. Idealism, individual and social welfare, "the larger good," are being analyzed anew by the ardent, hopeful and impatient youth of this generation. While many orators and writers were bemoaning the crass materialism of the age, forces unseen by superficial thinkers were undermining the basis of the evils they deplore. To-day, young men and young women are turning from the ideal of individual wealth getting as the chief aim of life to the fascinating ideal of expert service and world brotherhood. And this is not because the youth of to-day is so much superior to his immediate predecessor or so much more sympathetic; but because the old goals are not to be reached, and because an unprecedented world crisis has given him a broader and a clearer vision. "Nature is rapidly exhausting her stock of bargains," a popular writer informs us. The untrained, "happy-go-lucky" individual has little opportunity to obtain exceptional returns. The day of the expert is dawning; opportunity is knocking at new doors. The young men of our great middle class, trained in university and professional schools, are in the immediate future to manage American big business and public enterprises.

The actual managers of typical enterprises of to-day are employed experts—well-trained salaried men. The owners of the business—the stockholders—are scattered far and wide. Of course many

high salaried jobs are still held by the sons and relatives of large stockholders; but their real relation to the actual management is usually nominal. And more and more are business projects to be regulated or operated by the government through boards or commissions composed of well-trained persons. Men of the type of General Goethals, Robert G. Valentine and John R. Commons, rather than of the type of Carnegie, Rockefeller and Morgan, are to be the honored men of the next decade or two. Not much longer in mere money-making can the average youth of to-day find the stuff out of which to feed his ambitions and to construct his ideals; but, nevertheless, business activities as well as the great reform movements of the day do offer such material in abundance. The newer type of business man is beginning to look upon business as a profession in the best sense of that somewhat abused term.

As a consequence, doubtless, of certain lessons taught by the Great War, the individualistic atomism of yesterday is being forgotten in the presence of a stirring enthusiasm for team-work. Human betterment is the new and popular shibboleth. Many are the forces now making the widespread development of the spirit of mutual helpfulness and of social service or community work. A new vision of world betterment is gradually spreading line by line, feature by feature, over those of the past, as one

picture of the lantern slowly and almost imperceptibly dissolves into another. But this is the splendid vision which the manual laborers have ever seen dimly and as if afar off.

In recent years, Americans have, as the result of necessity, manifested much interest in industrial relations, in the point of view of the workers, and in the causes of industrial unrest and of the antagonism between employers and employees. On all sides, up to the entrance of the United States into the Great Struggle, the observer found discord and "sizzling animosity." The point of view of the American wage worker is often declared to be biased and prejudiced; and the ideals and practices of organized labor are often held to be subversive of the best interests of society and, indeed, of its own best interests. The following extract from an article published in *The Forum* is typical of complaints made by many employers in a period of expanding business. "Instead of taking advantage of the higher wages to save money or better their condition, a large proportion of the workingmen take holidays after they have earned a sum equal to their usual weekly wage. And even while at work, the employers reported, the men have been lazy and independent. . . . Artisans, mechanics and laboring men have lost what small respect they had for their employers. Remonstrance has failed to curb the spread of insolence, instead an effort to stir up the men has led to strikes or the men quitting with-

out notice."⁵ In this article the time honored, but naïve, assumption is made that workingmen ought to be docile and faithful machines.

In the days of peace employers repeatedly asserted that men "are too lazy to work"; and unfortunately this assertion had in many cases a very considerable element of truth. Work is too often—usually—performed by the average unskilled wage worker in a spiritless manner. Too many workers hate their job, watch the clock and "soldier." And yet, on occasion, the indifferent and spiritless worker will rise to heights of enthusiasm. He will, for example, "yell his head off at a ball game." The mass of workers possess great latent possibilities; there are, indeed, enormous untapped human resources. The achievements of the American army in France offer adequate testimony. The problem is to tap these latent possibilities in the ordinary times of peace. Why are the ambitions and hopes which are characteristic of young persons crushed out of so many workers? What are the conditions in industry or in home life which cause the bright hopes and stirring ambitions to fade, and which transform the youth into the hopeless and spiritless unskilled worker, into the migratory and casual worker, into the hobo and the down-and-outer? Here are problems which may well attract the attention of the unionist, of the employer, of the social worker and of the statesman. If the nation's greatest asset is

⁵ *The Forum*, September, 1916, pp. 382-383.

its men; then, indeed, this problem of the deterioration of manhood has been and may again be an acute and vital problem in the United States.

Bitter denunciations or emotional appeals accomplish little or nothing in modifying the attitude of the workers, or in clarifying the irritating and complex problems involved. Careful inquiries into causes are sorely needed. Why does the worker "soldier" on the job? Why does he manifest little or no enthusiasm for his job or its results? Why do both unionists and nonunionists so frequently restrict output? Why are workers lacking in "loyalty" to their employers? Why are the number of migratory and casual workers increasing? These and many other similar questions go directly to the core of the difficulty.

From the early days when the captives in battle were forced to till the soil for the benefit of their conquerors, through the long eras of slavery and serfdom, to the modern wage system with its definite payment of money wages, there has been a fundamental difference in the point of view of the worker, on the one hand, and that of the master, feudal landlord or employer, on the other. The latter is interested primarily in the product of the worker's toil, and only secondarily in the welfare and uplift of the toiler. The modern employer is more humane than his prototype; but the basic incentive in his demand for workers is old. The

workers, ancient, medieval or modern, were and are, of course, self-centered. They have been dragged into the active work of the world unwillingly, as if by the hair of the head. Compulsion—the lash, fear of hunger and of the lack of comforts—has been the potent, but negative, force which has throughout the years hastened the steps of the lagging worker. Work has been to the worker a means to an end,—escape from the lash of the master or to gain a livelihood; there has been little joy in work. To the employer, or the master, productive activity on the part of the mass of people is the excuse for their existence. The workers in this new era of great productivity are catching the vision that work should be performed for the sake of leisure and comfort for themselves. Modern democracy is emphasizing, in the phraseology of another, not more respect for men, but respect for more men. “More respect for men” is the older idea; “respect for more men” is a phrase pregnant with hope of better living conditions for the masses. “Respect for more men” and for all sorts of men is an essential part of the inspiring plan to “make the world safe for democracy.” But this is little more than a vision as yet; and few are the employers who have even caught a glimpse of this inspiring ideal. May the War teach us all that democracy, world peace and progress demand faithful and efficient work from all and a measure of self-sacrifice in the interest of social welfare.

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It is often asserted that employees, particularly union men, are not loyal to their employers. The unionist retorts by asking: Why should an employee be "loyal" to his employer? And what is meant by the term when used by dissatisfied and irritated employers? By loyalty, if the term is analyzed carefully, employers usually mean willing and somewhat humble submission to the wishes and mandates of the employers. Historically considered, the "loyalty" concept is a survival of feudal ideals carried down into the twentieth century. May not the persistent inquirer reasonably ask: are sellers of commodities expected to exhibit "loyalty" toward the purchasers of these commodities? If not, why should the employees of a corporation manifest "loyalty" toward the purchasers of their labor power? Does the employer in turn exhibit great "loyalty" toward his employees? Does he not vociferously insist unless restrained by the war power of the government that he may hire and fire any and all of his employees for any reason or for no reason? Should not "loyalty" be a reciprocal relation? Stripped of nonessentials and of antiquated conceptions of human relationships, loyalty means fealty to an employer. It means that the worker ought not to follow the course of action dictated by self-interest or by the interests of the working class. "Loyalty" contains, carefully concealed under the cloak of duty and fidelity, the feudal conceptions of inequality and the superiority

of the employer over the employee. If this analysis reveals the true significance of loyalty, it can with propriety be eliminated in a democracy. A recent and very stimulating writer has enthusiastically declared that "a willingness to be nothing is a crime against mankind. The amount of actual damage which the humble and contrite of spirit can inflict upon the class to which they belong, upon the coming generation, and upon relatives is equaled by nothing short of war and pestilence. To fail of self-assertion is to carry backward the hopes of others." ⁶ In fact, as has been indicated, the conditions which stimulated and cherished loyalty to individuals are passing. "The personal relationship in industry is fading; the tenure of a job is becoming weaker; the pride of individual work is vanishing as division and standardization of labor advances."

From the point of view of efficiency and of incentive there are at least two fatal weaknesses in the industrial situation which prevailed up to April, 1917. Much of the work which must be performed when no war emergency grips the nation is done under conditions which make it uninteresting and which also lead the worker to feel that it is of little importance. Secondly, the idea is too often impressed upon the worker through the teachings of the school of experience that rapid and efficient work spells lack of work for himself and

⁶ Weeks, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 21, p. 519.

his fellow workers. Doubtless, the regularizing of industry will go far toward eliminating the second difficulty.

The typical worker of to-day is sentenced to a monotonous routine day after day, year in and year out; he soon becomes almost automatic in his movements. The wage worker reluctantly, under the goad of economic necessity, works half-heartedly without seeing the end in view and without in even the remotest fashion perceiving that he is an important and a necessary factor in society's great producing mechanism. To what extent war time experience may cause a modification in this observation is as yet an unknown quantity. Modern industrial methods do not give the worker in the ranks joy in his work, it does not give him the thrill of worthwhile achievement, it gives him little inkling of the usefulness of his activity. The wage worker has not known "what it is all about"; the publicity given national requirements during the War may assist the worker in visualizing his job. Few there are who are joyful in the performance of their daily tasks. And each morning "the spiritless and sodden tread of millions headed for the factories cannot but be impressive." But, it may again be remarked, these indifferent and spiritless workers have a great untapped reserve of energy. The Great War surely furnished sufficient proofs to substantiate this statement. The War is

over but we are again hearing "the spiritless and sodden tread of millions" of workers.

A job means an opportunity to earn a living; it should also mean an opportunity to be of service to the community,—an opportunity to produce some service or commodity which will be of benefit to fellowmen. The War has taught many Americans that industry should be carried on in the interest of the entire nation. A job should also offer an opportunity for the satisfaction of the "instinct of workmanship" which is possessed by every normal human being. A job should be something more than an "eternal grind." But this is not all. The lack of effective motivation of the typical wage worker is one of the fundamental weaknesses of the present industrial order under peaceful conditions. Educators emphasize the importance of interest. Lack of interest is a serious handicap in the development of a student. Lack of interest in the work to be performed likewise spells inefficiency on the part of the manual worker. If a worker is interested only in his pay envelope, if he has little or no interest in turning out good work, if his "instinct of workmanship" is in no way appealed to, his efficiency will be below par in spite of shrewdly devised schemes of driving or of scientific management. "What little experience is as yet available points to the conclusion that devices for securing a genuine enthusiasm for the job mean much more than any system of scientific management for the health and

happiness of the employee, for industry, and for industrial peace." ⁷

Doubtless, the efficiency of an industrial organization depends in part upon whether it is doing "worthwhile" work or making profits a maximum. "As a rule, capable workers become interested in some concrete aspect of what they are doing. For example, a railroad force will be keen for mastering snowdrifts and floods, for making schedule time, breaking records, beating a rival road, or perfecting the service. They strain continually to reach a standard of excellence in their minds, and normally, as their efforts succeed, their standard rises." ⁸ But when profits become the sole aim of the management, the eagerness—the zeal—of the workers evaporates.

Before the imperfectly defined ideals of the working class can become more than glittering generalities having no relation to conduct in the work-a-day world, the working group must obtain, what Professor Cooley has called, "a corporate consciousness and a sense of the social worth of its function." This can come under modern conditions only after the development of strong and stable unions which are safe from bitter antagonism. Union men cannot get "a sense of the social worth" of their work while they are forced to put militant activities in

⁷ Fisher, *American Labor Legislation Review*, 1917, vol. 7, p. 20.

⁸ Ross, *American Journal of Sociology*, July, 1916, pp. 6-7.

the foreground. The anti-social ideals which so often appear among organized workers are the natural fruits of modern industry and of industrial autocracy. To develop high ideals as to function and workmanship, a stable and organized group must be brought into existence whose function and right to live are recognized by the leaders in the industrial and political world. "The union, fighting for its right to live, is sometimes forced to tolerate acts that would not be countenanced, if its entity were secure and its rights were not absorbed in fighting for existence." *

A distinct line of cleavage appears between even the most altruistic middle class progressive and the unionist whether the latter be of the business or of the revolutionary type. What the unionist really wants, and firmly believes is his due, is more pay for the same or for less work. The employer, of course, is insistent upon more work from the worker, and he is especially interested in larger profits. The reformer of the progressive type takes the middle ground. He insists on the essential harmony of economic interests. His slogan is more efficient work, greater output, higher wages, and incidentally profits which are not lessened. The reformer, who is not as a rule subjected to the usual pressure of the business world, presents the alluring, but indefinite, ideal of service. But the worker posi-

* *Report of Commission on Industrial Relations*, 1915 ed., p. 280.

tively asserts that his first duty is to himself and his family, and to others of the working class. He demands higher wages and a shorter working day without caring whether these demands will lead to more or less service to the community. The employer, likewise, demands his profits irrespective of service. A careful analysis of the ideals and motives of the middle class reformers and experts as a group will doubtless disclose a considerable modicum of group selfishness and class prejudice.

The methods used by various organized groups of wage earners and the ideals held by them seem widely different to many observers. Organized labor may be roughly classed into two not entirely distinct kinds: Business and revolutionary unionism. The former accepts the present order—but strives earnestly to improve the condition of the working class through collective bargaining, strikes, boycotts and other familiar union methods. This group stands for step by step betterment of the working class. Perhaps its program will eventually lead to a new economic order, but the vision of this type of unionist is fixed upon immediate goals. On the other hand, the revolutionary unionist is impatient and distrustful of slow gains; he is eager forthwith to eliminate the capitalist and the middle class.

Complacent Americans have confidently asserted that socialism and revolutionary unionism are of European origin and that these will inevitably

wither and die when planted in the soil of free America. But the socialism which emphasizes political action is here and enjoying a healthy growth; and in recent years a modified form of syndicalism and of revolutionary unionism has raised its sinister form in America and England. Direct action is the plan of the radical industrial unionist. With "the one big union" he proposes even in wartime to strike directly at the heart of the nation by paralyzing some great integrated industry. This enthusiastic radical is passionately urging his collaborators to force the capitalist, the general public and the government to come to terms with organized labor by means of a mass strike which will stop the heartbeat of industry, or by means of sabotage which is a peculiarly insidious weapon. The employer has too often starved out his striking employees; the direct actionist is eagerly reaching for the same weapon. The latter proposes to starve or freeze the nation into submission by stopping transportation or by refusing to dig coal. And in view of recent and familiar events, the task does not appear to be impossible or chimerical. A mass or industrial union with power at the flash of a signal to tie up the shipping of a great nation, an entire railway system, or the associated plants of a giant industrial corporation, is an organization possessing great power. It is useless to call such an organization or its members bad names or to reiterate the statement that it can never succeed. Syndi-

calism, direct action, the mass strike and the industrial union are actualities. The English "revolt of labor" of a few years ago, the Lawrence strike, the threatened railway strikes of 1916 and 1917, and the various "free-speech" fights are foretastes of what may follow in the not distant future.

The men who crowd the ranks of the revolutionary unions, the men who join the Industrial Workers of the World, are the restless and the ir-repressible. They are in many respects like the men who, in the earlier years of our national history, pressed eagerly forward over the trails which led to the frontier, to the gold mines and to the haunts of the picturesque cowboy. The members of the Industrial Workers of the World are the successors of the boys who went West or to sea. To-day, the quietude, routine, regularity and repression of industrial life are repulsive to these vigorous and primitive-like men, and they appear as anti-social groups, vigorously protesting against the new order of things. Although these men are individualistic, they emphasize the harmony of interests among members of the working class.

The industrial unionist and many old-line trade unionists are abandoning old and familiar watchwords and traditional policies. For example, the revolutionary unionist is opposed to making contracts with employers. This new unionist objects to the ratification of labor contracts which bind the employees for a given period of time. The

radical in the ranks of organized labor declares that the strength of the militant union is the only adequate guarantee that the provisions of a labor contract will be carried out. He demands the privilege of striking, or of threatening to strike, at what seems to be the most advantageous moment. The sympathetic or multiplied strike is, therefore, given a prominent place among the up-to-date weapons of militant unionism. In the revised doctrines of industrial, mass, or even of amalgamated unionism the old humanitarian doctrine of the harmony of interests between employer and employee is disdainfully rejected. The stirring slogan of these enthusiastic and bigoted partisans is the solidarity of the wage-earning class. Even conservative unionists are beginning to accept these ideals of the radical group; and such decisions as that given in the famous Danbury Hatters' Case in which the principle that individual members are financially "responsible without limit for the unlawful actions of the union officers and agents which they have in any manner authorized or sanctioned," are powerful factors in transforming conservative into radical unionists.¹⁰ The World War with its emphasis upon democracy checked this tendency. The course of events during the first year of reconstruction unfortunately points to the conclusion that this check will only be temporary.

¹⁰ See Commons and Andrews, *Principles of Labor Legislation*, pp. 120-122.

Not only has industrial integration or combination furnished an incentive and a reason for the partial erasure of craft differences and demarcations, but the shortsighted and fatuous policy of many associations of employers, such as, for example, that of the National Association of Manufacturers, is driving many trade union men into a hard and coherent mass union in which trade demarcations count for little. And the bitter, unreasoning, archaic hatred and opposition of many members of such associations do but furnish the fuel which heats the melting pot and reduces the crystallized trade unions to the amorphous mass union. These gentlemen are in reality the promoters *par excellence* of revolutionary industrial unionism and of impossibilist socialism.

The strength of the constitutional barriers which have been thrown around property rights in this country has furnished much ammunition for the direct actionists. When a conservative writer like President Hadley of Yale University tells us that "the general status of the property owned under the law cannot be changed by the action of the legislature, or the executive, or the people of a state voting at the polls, or all these put together," it is not difficult to see how the impatient mass of poorly paid wage earners may readily be induced to accept the crude philosophy of direct action. The futility of indirect—political—action is pointed out, and the old appeal to violence again stirs the hearts of

wage workers confronting well organized and hostile employers aided by legal and constitutional forms. Furthermore, the big corporations themselves too often set an example in direct action by the use of corruption funds, jackpots, armed guards, and extra-legal political pressure.

History clearly records the fact that revolution is far less efficient as an instrument of progress than evolution. Revolution moves forward rapidly but not steadily, and the inevitable reaction spells retrogression. Both the forward and the backward movements are accompanied by much social friction culminating frequently in bloodshed and the destruction of property. The spectacular industrial changes which have transformed the stage coach into the locomotive and the Pullman parlor car, the blacksmith's hammer into a giant drop hammer, and the individual firm into a nest of interrelated big corporations, have effectively paved the way toward great social and legal adjustments. To stand firm for the old rights and privileges is but to store up wrath for the future. Sooner or later the obstacles formed by legal technicalities and ruthless economic power will be swept aside; and the longer the delay the greater the amount of pent-up social energy in the form of dissatisfaction and unrest. If progress toward economic justice and equality of opportunity is arbitrarily held back by unwise and out-of-date legislation and legal decisions, and by frantic appeals to outgrown watch-

words and formulæ, the flood, like that which follows the breaking of a river dam, will be destructive. The French Revolution is an extreme example of the manner in which long-obstructed evolution paves the way for revolution and later for reaction. If, on the other hand, reform measures are passed, if labor organizations are recognized and bargained with as was done under the pressure of the war emergency, the disaster may be obviated and the friction of adjustment to large scale industry may be reduced to a minimum.

Nevertheless, in spite of their apparent radicalism, the rank and file of the working class are naturally and consistently conservative except when many are subjected to the pressure of distressing circumstances or of rank social injustice. The radical reformers of the revolutionary type will not become dangerous; they will outrun public sentiment and their ideals will be considered the vagaries of brainless or personally inefficient enthusiasts, unless the reactionary conservatives obtain sufficient power, and use it, to block political, legal and social adjustments to new conditions resulting from economic and industrial advance and the stress of war. Increasing class antagonisms, mass strikes, the bitter recriminations of employers' associations and labor organizations of the pre-war period, all pointed to increasing social friction and maladjustments. The question is: Shall the adjustment to "trustified" industry and world markets be by revolution or by

evolution? Not: Shall there be adjustment? Adjustment is inevitable; but direct action is not necessarily inevitable. In a consideration of the probable trend of American unionism in the immediate future, these points must not be forgotten.

Internationalism and anti-militarism are two closely related and quite generally accepted ideals of the wage-earning class. The great European war inevitably led America to place increased stress upon nationalism and preparedness for military emergencies. The working people of the United States and of other nations may be expected to constitute the backbone of the opposition to plans for military conquest and to extreme devotion to the spirit of nationalism. Before it was anticipated that the United States would be drawn into the great world struggle, Mr. Gompers, speaking before the National Civic Federation, is reported to have said in part: "The wage earners no longer will be denied their right to participate in determining those things which affect their welfare. . . . No part of our citizenship is more unalterably opposed to ideals of militarism and compulsion." John P. White, President of the United Mine Workers, the largest national union affiliated in the American Federation, also opposed agitation for preparedness. Advocates of preparedness had little patience with the position of organized labor. An editorial in one of the leading American newspapers tersely expressed the sentiments of the friends of preparedness. "Labor's

scheme of an internationalism along class lines and of conflict and competition by classes instead of by nations is a foolish piece of sedition." ¹¹ But when the war clouds gathered, the unionists of the nation asserted that they would loyally support the government.

But American workingmen insist, and with reason, that the peace standards in regard to hours of labor and other conditions of labor shall not be cast aside under stress of military necessity. The experience of England in the early period of the war shows clearly that the efficiency of workers decreases when subjected to the strain of overtime, Sunday work and excessive speed. The American Association for Labor Legislation and the National Consumers' League also opposed efforts to emasculate protective laws which were on the statute books of American states at the opening of the war. Labor, along with many other groups, also demanded that the burdens of war rest upon all classes of the nation, and that no economic class be permitted to garner extraordinary profits because of war. An editorial in the official journal of the mine workers clearly explains the view of the wage workers. "Labor in the United States, as in every part of the world, stands ready to do its full share in the service of the country in her hour of stress, but assurance in advance that in this war all will be

¹¹ *The Chicago Tribune*, June 30, 1916.

called upon alike to sacrifice according to their means and their needs, that no economic class will be permitted to secure an advantage that will tend to destroy or deter the observance of the rights of others will go far to bring about that full co-operation that the present emergency demands." ¹³

One of the most significant expressions of internationalism on the part of organized labor in America is to be found in the labor conference between representatives of organized labor in Mexico and the United States, held at Washington in July, 1916. The purpose of this conference was primarily to avoid war between the two countries represented; and it seems to have aided materially in removing certain sources of irritation. The workers in both countries were urged to "do everything in their power to promote correct understanding of purposes and actions, to prevent friction, to encourage good will, and to promote an intelligent national opinion that ultimately shall direct relations between our countries and shall be a potent humanitarian force in promoting world progress." The members of the conference also expressed themselves as heartily in favor of a pan-American federation of labor which should include the United States, Mexico, and Central and South American countries. Mr. Gompers declared: "A pan-American federation of labor is not only possible but necessary." These steps on the part of organized

¹³ *United Mine Workers' Journal*, April 19, 1917.

labor indicate a firm determination to give practical effect to certain fundamental ideals of the wage workers of the world. The President of the Laborers' Friendly Society of Japan was present at the 1916 convention of the American Federation. An invitation was extended to send delegates to Japan in the spring of 1917 to attend the fifth anniversary of the Japanese organization. This episode has been heralded as an attempt "to bridge the Pacific."

Organized labor in the United States is favorable to the adoption of a policy by this nation looking toward some form of world federation in order to secure, if possible, a lasting peace among the nations of the world. In November, 1917, the Convention of the American Federation of Labor unanimously declared in favor of: "The combination of the free peoples of the world in a common covenant for genuine and practical coöperation to secure justice and therefore peace in relations between nations."

CHAPTER X

RECENT PRE-WAR TENDENCIES

A great war inevitably causes important social and political changes. Since August, 1914, and more particularly since April 6, 1917, affairs have moved rapidly in the United States. Now that the War is ended Americans will doubtless find that the "old order" has been greatly modified; and modified, let us hope, for the better—but not transmuted into a new order without close relationships to the pre-war era. To attempt in the year 1919 to chart the trend of events in regard to organized labor in America is not easy, and the likelihood of error is considerable. Before the War opened certain tendencies in the sphere of organized labor were being disclosed. It seems logical and historically sound to anticipate that many of these tendencies may be greatly accelerated but not skewed beyond recognition by the War. If, however, this conclusion proves to be unsound, if the post-war world proves to be, as certain individuals fondly and naïvely imagine, an entirely new world purged of the dross and selfishness of the pre-war era and chastened by suffering and sorrow, if class

and interest demarcations are practically erased after the War, this chapter has been written from an erroneous point of view.

In the field of labor organizations during recent years two probable lines of progress or change stand out prominently. Which is to be the predominant form of labor organization in the near future, the trade or craft type or the industrial type of union? And will labor organizations of the next decade or two stress political or industrial action? Upon the answer which time brings to these two questions depend in no small measure the strength, the success and the potency for good or evil of the American labor movement in the immediate future. In this chapter, consideration will be given to the tendencies which are making for and against industrial unionism, and for and against political action.

The spectacular and noisy always attract attention and are given space in the newspapers and popular magazines, while the more powerful and silent forces are often overlooked or underemphasized. As a consequence, the average American has been led to believe that the labor organization, which is soon to become most powerful in the United States, is the aggressive and blatant Industrial Workers of the World. That the more conservative, stable and potent group of unions affiliated together in the American Federation of Labor has been growing steadily, and, what is even of

greater import, changing many of their policies, has escaped the notice of the great mass of fairly well informed Americans. As a matter of fact, the American Federation is undergoing revolutionary changes in a quiet and unostentatious fashion,—changes which are transforming the nature and policies of this the greatest of American labor organizations. The future of American unionism can best be discerned by studying this organization and its affiliated unions.

The phenomenon of syndicalism or I. W. W.-ism in the West and Middle West, however, must not be neglected. The existence of over a half a million discontented and distrustful wage workers, many of whom are migratory and homeless, presents a social and industrial problem of great importance. Unless our governmental authorities treat these men in a sympathetic manner and attempt to dig down to the causes of unrest and abnormality, the United States may soon face serious internal dissensions; and unless the American Federation of Labor formulates definite and intelligent plans for organizing and aiding these neglected workers, its future progress may suffer serious retardation. In the judgment of the writer, recent tendencies within the Federation may soon make possible an approach between old-line unionism and the more conservative elements of the Industrial Workers of the World. Testimony has indeed been offered to the effect that a considerable number of western workers hold

cards in a regular union in the American Federation and also in the Industrial Workers.

Colonel Disque's experience with the lumberjacks of the Pacific Northwest, many of whom were members of the Industrial Workers of the World, indicates that these workers will respond to fair treatment and square dealing. The failure of the average citizen, of the great mass of employers, and even of social workers and students of economic and political affairs, to recognize the fact that the radical labor movement cannot be suppressed or made conservative by means of palliative or repressive measures, is one of the dangers to be discerned in the present trend of events. The late Professor Parker, a most discerning student of the Western labor situation, pointed out "that ninety per cent. of the migratory workers, the vagrants, the casuals, the hobos, the hunted men who harvest the crops, muck the ores out of mines, fell the spruce for airplanes and the great Douglass firs for ship timbers, are womanless, jobless, voteless men, that because of the unstable industrial life to which our diseased industrialism has consigned them, they have lost the conventional relationship to woman and child life, lost their voting franchise, lost the habit of common comfort and dignity, and have gradually become a caste-conscious group with fewer legal and social rights than are conventionally ascribed to Americans."¹ This statement pictures a situa-

¹ Bruere, *The New Republic*, May 18, 1918, p. 83.

tion full of social dynamite both for organized government and for the type of labor organizations now affiliated in the American Federation of Labor.

The Federation was organized as a weak federation of trade or craft unions. Its average paid-up membership, that is, the paid-up membership of its affiliated unions, increased slowly up to 1898, in which year it was reported to be 278,016. The next six years constituted a period of extraordinary growth. In 1904, the paid-up membership was reported to be 1,676,200; that is, in the short space of six years the membership was increased sixfold. But not again until 1911 did the membership attain the high-water mark of 1904. In the former year the membership was 1,761,835. The year 1913 recorded a new high-water mark; the average paid-up membership was 1,996,004. In 1914, the membership passed the two million mark; but in the next year it was reduced to 1,946,347. In 1916, the two-million mark was again passed; in 1917, the reported membership was 2,371,434; and it was increased to 3,250,000 in 1919. The actual membership of the American Federation of Labor is considerably greater than the reports indicate. The affiliated unions pay a tax to the Federation in proportion to the number of members reported. But some of the locals are tax dodgers; and members on a strike do not as a rule pay dues. In June, 1919, nearly all of the important labor unions except the Industrial Workers of the World, certain railway brother-

hoods, and a seceding branch of clothing workers were affiliated in the Federation. The total membership of all American unions not affiliated with the latter is probably not over 600,000.²

But more significant than the gain in membership are certain modifications going on inside of the Federation. Originally, and indeed until recently, it has stood for a narrow trade group ideal. Emphasis has been placed upon the skilled; the unskilled worker was overlooked. The trade or craft, not the industry as a whole, was the significant fact. The American Federation of Labor has been merely a loose grouping of compact and practically self-governing national unions, such as the Typographical Union and the Cigarmakers' Union. Affiliated unions were in a large measure independent of each other in vital matters connected with trade union action. One union affiliated in the Federation might strike and other workers, members of other affiliated unions, continue at work in the same establishment. A strike of machinists in a plant might occur and the union molders remain at work. Such a situation may indeed arise to-day; but organized labor is beginning to question the wisdom of the isolated craft policy.

The American Federation has fostered group loyalty. It has exalted practical, immediate and trade or craft ends. But twentieth century industrial

² See Carlton, "The Changing American Federation of Labor," *The Survey*, Nov. 21, 1914.

methods are rapidly and ruthlessly destroying the potency and significance of the craft as a fundamental unit in industry, and also are surely undermining the strength of the old-line isolated and self-sufficient trade or craft unions. The organized opposition of consolidated capital weakened many strong and reasonably conservative labor organizations such as the Iron, Steel and Tin Workers' Amalgamated Association, the Lake Seamen's Union, and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. The latter union which now includes chauffeurs has recently increased in membership. Outside the building trades, the railway brotherhoods and a few unions composed chiefly of highly skilled men, the old-line trade unions had been fighting, up to our entrance into the World War, a losing battle when confronted by integrated capital. If, however, after the War is ended, the steady pressure against unionism, the persecution of labor leaders, the deportation of workers and the attempts to attack the unions in the courts again become features of the policy of associations of employers; the American Federation of Labor will be obliged to adopt a radical program or suffer disintegration. If disintegration occurs, the ultra-radical unionist will inevitably forge to the front. And in that case the nation may be brought face to face with a cataclysm. A widespread and determined attack on unionism will transmute it into "a class-conscious revolutionary

movement." ⁸ In short, an active policy of union-smashing will drive the conservative and bargaining unions to adopt many of the policies now advocated and too often carried out by the Industrial Workers of the World.

The trust, wide scale business and exclusive occupation of the field are now familiar terms; but their concomitant phenomena, industrial unionism and direct action, among the wage workers are just rising above the mental horizon of the average American citizen. Industrial integration, the amalgamation of various industries under one control as in the case of the United States Steel Corporation, is the aim of the great captains of industry. Consequently, mass or industrial unionism, representing a similar grouping of interests among wage earners, is the insistent demand of increasing numbers of aggressive workingmen. The old forms of trade and craft unionism are on the decline or are assuming forms not consonant with orthodox trade union organizations.

To-day, the interests of the blacksmiths, the machinists and the painters employed by a great railway system are, in reality, not very dissimilar. The machinists alone, although aided by fellow unionists in manufacturing plants and other establishments, are not in a strategic position in bargaining with the railway company or in engineering a strike. They

⁸ See Hoxie, *Trade Unionism in the United States*, p. 186.

are strong when their fellow workers for the company, skilled and unskilled, stand shoulder to shoulder with them. The employees of great trusts and of large interstate railway systems are rapidly learning that coöperation is a powerful weapon. United, they are strong; divided along craft lines, they are in imminent danger of witnessing the piece-meal destruction of their craft organization. For one group of employees of a large corporation to remain at work while another is striking was coming at the close of the pre-war period to be recognized, from the point of view of the unionist, as an extremely shortsighted method of procedure.

The future of the American Federation of Labor, formed as a weapon of affiliated trade unions, depends upon its ability to adjust itself to a situation which demands the partial erasure of craft demarcations in labor organizations, a situation which demands some form of industrial unionism or at least amalgamation rather than craft unionism of the old-line type. Industrial evolution is developing large scale centralized industry. Can the American Federation cast aside its original ideals, and cut across trade lines? Can it make the form of organization of its affiliated bodies square with modern industrial organization? Can it become a Federation of Industrial unions or of amalgamated organizations? What are the tendencies which recent years disclose? Upon the answers to these questions depend the future of the Federation and, in a large meas-

ure, also of organized labor in the United States. The form of organization is, indeed, no minor matter. The trade or craft union is an antiquated weapon in the fight against strong employers and employers' associations unless the skill of the trade is still a potent factor, or some other special place of vantage remains. To meet the mighty German army with the weapons of the Civil War or of the Spanish-American War spells speedy and ignominious defeat. To combat for higher wages and shorter hours with the methods of 1866 likewise means defeat for organized labor.⁴

The Federation in its convention held in 1912, voted down a resolution by approximately a two to one vote to the effect "that, where practical, one organization should have jurisdiction over an industry." The autonomy declaration passed in 1901 was reaffirmed. But the Executive Committee in its report very carefully pointed out that autonomy did not mean opposition to the amalgamation of allied or subdivided crafts. The opposition to industrial unionism is, indeed, much more apparent than actual. Industrial unionism is a tabooed term in the American Federation because it smacks too much of socialism and syndicalism; but amalgamation is in good standing. In an era of large scale production and of machinery, amalgamation and industrial unionism need not necessarily be on antago-

⁴ Carlton, "Essentials in the Study of Labor Organizations," *The Scientific Monthly*, August, 1916.

nistic terms. On the other hand, an amalgamation of allied crafts may be interpreted as a broadening of the trade or craft basis of organization. It indicates the continuance of a smaller number of trade or craft unions, each covering a wide field. Amalgamation may delay rather than hasten the movement toward industrial unionism. Both amalgamation and industrial unionism now exist side by side within the American Federation of Labor. The Federation, declared its Executive Committee in 1912, "repudiates the insinuation which is implied by the term 'Industrial Unionism' as it is employed by the so-called 'Industrial Workers of the World' in antagonism to 'Trade Unionism,' for in that implication the false impression is conveyed that trade unions are rigid, unyielding, or do not adjust themselves to new conditions," and expand. The American Federation may be moving toward industrial unionism, but it flatly refuses to accept the term used by a radical and hated rival organization. In 1913 and in 1915, the policy reaffirmed in 1912 was again acted upon favorably.

The American Federation of Labor is a big institution and, consequently, affected by institutional lag or inertia. Changes in policies and ideals of necessity come slowly. Many of the leaders in the organization have been such for the greater part of its career. They cannot be expected hastily and joyfully to repudiate their past actions. It is to be anticipated that they will insistently cling to terms

and phrases long after their original significance has vanished. But that the process of amalgamation plus the destruction of many forms of skill may eventually lead to some form of industrial unionism seems to be recognized by members of the Federation.

That trade lines are actually being erased and that the importance of skill is being reduced may also be shown by a number of recent changes within the American Federation. The effect of the unification of control in industry was early felt by the brewery workers and the mine workers. The industrial form of labor organization has been definitely carried into effect in the two industries. The United Brewery Workers, the United Mine Workers and the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, formerly the Western Federation of Miners, are industrial unions. The United Mine Workers have jurisdiction over nearly all workers working in and around coal mines. For example, the carpenters working regularly for the mine operators are expected to join the United Mine Workers. The Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers insists upon similar rights in and around metal mines; and the Brewery Workers organize all working in and around breweries. The brewery teamsters are affiliated with the brewery workers rather than with the teamsters' union. And one of these organizations of the industrial type, the United Mine Workers, is the largest national union affiliated in the

American Federation. In the 1916 convention of the Federation the delegates representing the United Mine Workers cast 3,180 votes out of a total of 20,973 cast by the delegates of the affiliated national unions, or nearly one in every six.

The organization of departments for the purpose of reducing jurisdictional struggles and bringing about harmonious relations between allied labor organizations, is likewise symptomatic. The five departments are: (1) Mining, in which are united the United Mine Workers, the Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Tin and Steel Workers, and the Associated Union of Steam Shovelers; (2) the building trades; (3) railway employees; (4) the metal trades; and (5) union label trades. In the railway employees' department the railway shop crafts are united. The aim of this department is to prevent single craft struggles with railway companies for higher wages and better working conditions. In 1913, the Secretary-Treasurer of the department reported that "thirty-five railway systems have granted federated agreements to the shop crafts." The federation of these shop crafts is certainly a long step toward industrial unionism in the railway industry; and the goal in view is a federation not merely of the railway shop men but of all railway employees. The effect that this strengthening of the federation of railway employees will have upon the relations which the machinists or the blacksmiths, for ex-

ample, employed by the railway company, sustain to the national union of machinists or of blacksmiths, is still uncertain; but the growth of a strong and powerful federation of railway employees will tend to make the latter more loyal to the federation than to their national union. However, the interests of the federation and of the national union need not necessarily be antagonistic.

At the convention of the Metal Trades' Department of the American Federation of Labor held in 1913, including twelve national unions, the regulations in regard to strikes were changed so as to provide for united action on the part of all organizations connected with the department. One group of workers, affiliated with the department, can no longer remain at work in a shop in case a strike is legally called after a referendum in that shop. An editorial in the *Machinists' Monthly Journal* expresses the new ideal of unionism. "The single craft organization of the old trade unionism was suitable to the times that brought it into existence and rendered excellent service to the workers that formed it, but it must now give place to the new organization built upon industrial lines. The old craft organizations must grow and expand until they embrace all workers in the industry of which these crafts are each a unit. . . . All the metal trades must get together, and act together as a unit, whenever the occasion demands it, because it is only in this way that modern conditions can be coped with."

However, an attempt made in 1915 to amalgamate the metal trades met with determined opposition. The molders voted against amalgamation by a vote of over five to two.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners has recently absorbed the Amalgamated Wood Workers' Association which was composed of machine wood workers and furniture workers. Arrangements are also being made to include the men in other wood-working industries. General Secretary Duffy writes: "We look forward with pleasurable anticipations to the day when it can be truly said that all men of the wood-working craft on this continent hold allegiance to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America." This ambitious program obviously runs counter to the policy sanctioned by the American Federation in granting to the United Mine Workers jurisdiction over carpenters regularly employed in and around coal mines. However, since both organizations are affiliated in the Federation, a compromise advantageous to both unions does not seem difficult of attainment. A carpenter belonging to the union might easily pass from the employ of a mining company to that of a contracting firm. While working for the mining company he might also become a member of the United Mine Workers. In case of a strike in the mine, the carpenters would go out; and, of course, no union carpenter would be allowed to take the place of his fellow unionists, these be-

ing unionists in a double capacity—union carpenters and union mine workers.

In 1912, the Western Federation of Miners and the International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Helpers reached an agreement of this sort. Provisions were made for an interchange of union cards. A blacksmith or helper under the jurisdiction of the Western Federation securing employment under the jurisdiction of the Brotherhood will, without payment of another initiation fee, be accepted as a member of the local in that place on depositing his Western Federation card. And the Western Federation agreed to accept a member of the Brotherhood under similar circumstances. "Trade autonomy and industrial autonomy are essentially antagonistic; but industrial unionism and trade unionism are not necessarily antagonistic to each other. Industrial and trade unions might exist side by side, and for complete and effective organization both seem to be necessary." ⁵

A very interesting evolution has been taking place among various classes of workers in the lumbering industry. About fifteen years ago the shingle weavers formed an international union. The membership was limited "to the men employed in skilled departments of the shingle trade." Recently these workers have recognized that a more inclusive organization was essential to their welfare. In 1912,

⁵ Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, p. 470.

the American Federation of Labor approved a plan for the organization of all workers, skilled and unskilled, employed in the lumber industry; and the organization was named the Timber Workers' International Union. The voting strength of the latter organization in the 1913 convention of the American Federation was double that allowed in the 1912 convention. In the convention of 1915, however, the voting strength was much less than in 1912. In the Report of the 1916 convention the organization was apparently again called the Single Weavers. No delegate was sent to the convention, and the voting strength was reduced below that allowed in the convention of 1915. One delegate was sent in 1917; and a new union of timber workers was organized. In spite of this experience, a statement made a few years ago by the president of this national union is interesting. It shows clearly why the movement toward amalgamation, federation and industrial unionism is taking place. The skilled are not moved primarily by altruistic motives; it is a selfish, but shrewd, movement on the part of the skilled. "Experience has shown that while a large percentage of the skilled men could protect their interests by organization on even so small a scale as this ten years ago, now a change has occurred. To meet this change the source of the workers' power has also had to change. It is no longer the worker's skill that is the chief element of strength. The leveling processes of ma-

chinery have made human skill less and less a factor, have caused the worker to realize that now he must rely chiefly upon strength of numbers. So the members of the shingle weavers' union learned that they must expand in order that they might meet the changes in the lumber industry."

The order of railway telegraphers includes "telephone operators, staffmen, station agents, linemen, interlockers, train dispatchers, line repairers, and train directors." The numerous jurisdictional disputes among different pipe trades has led to the amalgamation of all workers in the pipe trades into "one great union,"—the United Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Gasfitters, Steamfitters, and Steamfitters' Helpers. The Granite Cutters include in their union the polishers, rubbers, sawyers and the tool sharpeners. In 1915, the Glass Workers' International Association amalgamated with the painters, decorators and paperhangers.

The development of machinery in the glass trades precipitated a jurisdictional dispute between the Flint Glass Workers and the Machinists. Both asserted jurisdiction over the men making molds for molding glassware; the matter was considered again by the convention of 1917. In the 1913 convention of the American Federation of Labor, a delegate from the machinists' union declared that the evolution of machinery in various industries was placing the machinists in a very delicate position. Another delegate declared that in the glass-bottle-making

trades to-day the machinist is as much a factor as the bottle blower. Apparently the machinists must do as did the carpenters, who when confronted by the development of machinery in the wood-working trades insisted upon controlling all wood workers; or they must suffer disintegration in favor of another organization. In either case, further amalgamation of one form or another seems inevitable. The teamsters are struggling for their existence as a separate organization. Recently, they have engaged in jurisdictional struggles with the bakers, the brewery workers and the newspaper and mail deliverers. The American Federation decided in favor of the brewery workers; drivers of brewery wagons are to be under the jurisdiction of the brewery workmen.

In nearly all of the national unions affiliated in the American Federation of Labor, the national body has been gaining at the expense of the autonomy of the locals. In England an interesting counter movement has appeared and we may reasonably anticipate something of the same nature in the United States. The shop stewards' movement is a plan for unifying all workers in one establishment so that they may act together upon local issues. Workers in the same shop belonging to different trade unions are knit together in a shop federation. Such a movement inevitably leads to situations in which it runs counter to a national union which is highly centralized and which has members

in the shop stewards' system. This movement makes for decentralized and amalgamated government rather than for centralized and trade control. Such a plan represents a step toward industrial unionism or toward national guilds without repudiating trade unionism. It might, however, hasten the amalgamation of national unions; and in this way centralized control might be retained.

The solicitude recently manifested for the migratory worker is in marked contrast to the earlier ideals of trade unionism. The 1912 convention of the American Federation of Labor passed a resolution favoring the organization of the "migratory workers." In 1913, another resolution was adopted providing for a definite and comprehensive plan of organization for migratory workers, and for aiding in dovetailing industries in which such workers are utilized. It was urged that all unions should aid in "spreading the gospel of unionism among the unskilled and unorganized workers." The matter was again considered in 1915 and 1916. In 1910, the executive council of the Federation passed a resolution inviting Negroes into its ranks. The 1917 convention adopted a resolution urging a more comprehensive campaign among the Negroes and among the Mexican workers within the borders of the United States. Recently the American Federation is manifesting unusual interest in organizing women workers. All of which indicates that organized

trade unions have seen new visions and are preaching a new gospel of unionism.

Up to the present time, organizations of unskilled workers have as a rule been unsuccessful. The places occupied by the unskilled can be filled very easily, and few of them are organized. But, as has been pointed out, the introduction of machinery is gradually displacing the skilled man in many lines of work. The effect of the introduction of scientific management will be to narrow further the work of each worker, thus tending to make "any man who walks the street" the competitor of the man with a job. The aim of scientific management seems to be to reduce all occupations to the grade of unskilled or semiskilled work. The ease with which machine tending can be learned makes every unemployed person a very dangerous competitor. In many big industries, the skilled have lost their old and familiar position of superiority. The skill of the skilled is in danger of becoming of less importance than the method of directing and coördinating the members of gangs of unskilled.

The enlargement of the market area, the standardization of products, the striving after quantity, the growing use of automatic and semiautomatic machinery, and the progress of scientific management tend to undermine the skilled and to reduce all workers to a common denominator. On the other hand, scientific management is teaching the employers that an unstable labor force makes for in-

efficiency. This shifting of the center of gravity from the skilled to the unskilled may cause the future of unionism to look dark, unless political activity, the mass strike or some other alternative can be depended upon. In short, the traditional union tactics are of value especially to the trade or craft union, and may not be depended upon to give as excellent results when the unskilled fill the ranks of organized labor and control in its councils. Nevertheless, the United Mine Workers, an industrial union, has for several years successfully carried out a policy of bargaining with the mine operators.

Doubtless recent changes in the policy of the American Federation of Labor have been hastened by the birth and growth of the radical and aggressive Industrial Workers of the World. The members of the Federation hate this radical organization of the industrial union type; but they also recognize that it appeals chiefly to the numerous class of unskilled which they have been prone to overlook. Their Secretary-Treasurer, W. D. Haywood, forgetting the Knights of Labor, declares that the Industrial Workers of the World uttered the "first bold, brotherly cry which these ignored masses have ever heard." Hence, an added reason is given for the solicitude on the part of the members of the Federation for this hitherto neglected group. But the Industrial Workers of the World is an agitating group, not a stable form of organized labor. Its members are too individualistic to cohere firmly

except under the spur of an industrial dispute. However, it prepares the ground for constructive industrial unionism. The American Federation or some other organization will reap the fruits of the work of these pioneers in industrial unionism. The Western Federation of Miners, the union chiefly responsible for the organization of the Industrial Workers of the World, is now affiliated in the American Federation. Other workers and organizations may be expected to follow the same course unless reactionary influences gain the upper hand in the Federation.

The American Federation of Labor is increasing in numbers in spite of fierce opposition; and this federation of old-line trade unions is giving promise of power to adapt itself to changing industrial conditions. Amalgamation and federation within the Federation are taking place. Craft unionism inside the organization is giving way to amalgamation of allied trades and to industrial unionism. The substance of industrial unionism, stripped of the dry and repulsive husks of lawlessness, syndicalism and sabotage, is being gradually, unostentatiously and somewhat reluctantly absorbed by the Federation. If this process continues, if the Federation, with its affiliated national and international unions, gradually sloughs off the worn and divided shell of trade unionism and puts on in its stead the more attractive and cosmopolitan mantle of industrial unionism, this great labor organization must

throw on to the scrap-heap much of its narrowness and its practicality, and be contented with more of inclusiveness and of idealism. It will also be obliged to lessen the stress hitherto placed upon the requirement that the labor leader "deliver the goods" in the near future, and to increase the emphasis placed upon more diffused and slower returns. Can such a consummation reasonably be anticipated? Can the organization so completely change? Are the immediate necessities, the training and the experience of the mass of workers such that they are barred from the broader horizon of social welfare or even of working class welfare? How far can the trade group or the occupation group be submerged under the concept of a wage-working class? To steer the trade union craft safely through an uncharted channel so as to avoid shipwreck on the various rocks of opposition, and at the same time change the nature of the craft, is indeed a problem of industrial statesmanship.

Certainly organized labor in the United States has not yet acquired the social point of view and outlook. It still considers itself to be "a state within a state." But this attitude is doubtless in part a product of the dominance in governmental affairs of other classes and interests. And no matter what progress is made toward further socialization, it is reasonable to suppose that group interests will continue to be important factors in social control. "In a State which is industrialized, socialized, or trade-

federalized, men will evidently gather into parties much as they now gather into trade unions and other nonpolitical associations, according to their ideas of concrete group interest." ⁵ The fundamental problem is so far to harmonize group interests as to produce a serviceable community policy, one which does not overlook or unduly neglect the interests of any particular group, and which advances the interests of the community or the nation considered as a social unit. In order to work out such a policy both labor and employers must gain a more sympathetic and complete knowledge of the aims, problems and personality of the members of the other group. Until this primary step is taken progress toward harmonious relations must be slow and irregular. Too often the distrust which permeates the industrial world leads one group to look with suspicion upon any project, however meritorious, proposed by the other. Unless the atmosphere can be cleared of doubt, suspicion and prejudice, industrial peace in the United States after the War will hang only by a slender and easily broken thread.

As has been indicated in preceding chapters, the workingmen of the United States were important political factors in the decades immediately preceding the opening of the Civil War. Although the wage earners constitute a large and increasing per-

⁵ Millspaugh, *Advocate of Peace*, December, 1917, p. 329.

centage of the electorate of the nation, their influence upon legislation in recent years has been less potent than in the twenties and thirties of last century. Not only have the American wage workers in recent decades been politically weak, but, at the beginning of the Great War, America no longer held the proud position of the leading exponent of democracy. The leaders of liberal thought in America were studying "democratic institutions in Europe and Australia"; and the discontent among the wage workers had become so widespread and so evident that Congress saw fit to appoint a commission of investigation into the causes of industrial unrest. The task to which our attention is now directed is that of attempting to formulate an answer to the following question: What are the chief causes of the political impotency in recent years of the vast and discontented army of American wage earners? Since unorganized labor consists of unguided and disunited groups of wage earners, it only becomes an important and potent force for the betterment of labor conditions on either the industrial or the political field when it adheres to the program of organized labor. Therefore, the causes of the political weakness of organized labor are also causes of the political impotency of all American wage earners.

At least five reasons may be assigned for the political weakness of the American wage earners: (1)

The failure of the workers in this country to develop a strong labor party. (2) The activity and powerful opposition of well organized associations of employers. (3) The effect of the "machine process." (4) The large percentage of foreign-born and nonvoters among American wage earners. (5) The rise of the abler wage earners into the ranks of employers—farmers and small proprietors—into higher salaried positions, and into political positions. The political weakness of organized labor inevitably causes labor leaders to stress action on the industrial field—the strike, the boycott, the union label, the union shop. It has led the unionist to become very distrustful of welfare work and of ameliorative legislation. The reformer of the humanitarian type is not highly esteemed by the average labor leader of the present decade.

The American unionist, be he radical or conservative, is emphasizing more and more the importance of action by the union. In recent years the average unionist does not look with favor upon anything savoring of paternalism. For example, the American Federation of Labor in the Philadelphia convention of 1914 voted down a resolution in favor of making an effort to secure an eight hour day by means of legislative action; and the Convention of 1915 also defeated a similar resolution. The editor of a labor paper recently pointed out that "human liberties are not created by law"; and the three representatives of organized labor on the Federal Com-

mission on Industrial Relations insisted that new legislative and administrative machinery must not be considered as a cure-all for the ills of which the wage earners complain. At this point is noted a fairly distinct line of demarcation between the representatives of organized labor and the typical progressive of the present decade.

This tendency to oppose strenuously paternalism indicates that class consciousness is growing in strength amid the ranks of organized labor. It is clearly manifested in two somewhat dissimilar ways. In the first place, it means distrust of everything savoring of philanthropy or of welfare work. Secondly, it signifies a growing opposition to the extension of governmental activities—such as laws limiting the hours of labor, laws providing for compulsory arbitration and social insurance, and for the extension of governmental ownership of public utilities. Conservative trade unionists, socialists and syndicalists agree in regard to the first; but the socialists oppose the second tendency. This modification in the ideals of organized labor may be presented from another angle. It means: (1) Opposition to anything which seems to place the representatives of organized labor under the dominance of reformers or of the representatives of organized capital; and (2) opposition to all laws and tendencies which may restrict freedom of action on the part of labor organizations.

This undercurrent of aversion for humanitarian-

ism may be a reaction against the organized, commercialized and professionalized social service. Expert professional and amateur welfare workers are abroad in the land. Scientific management, welfare work, social service and the conservation of human energy are well known, almost hackneyed, phrases. Great endowments are being utilized to maintain and encourage the professional investigator and expert. The American people have humbly bowed down before the attractive altar of efficiency. College students, club women and professional social workers are eager and anxious to perform some form of social service. To give advice to, to minister unto, and to guide the workingman and his family are the ambitions of many ardent, hopeful and somewhat condescending individuals. And, moreover, not a few employers are finding that welfare work and social service pay dividends. On the other hand, organized workers, nonsocialist and socialist, feel and feel keenly that scientific management is merely a subtle way of overdriving them, that welfare work, social service and philanthropy are forms of "benevolent feudalism" which militate against the independence of the workers, and which reduce them to a position of tutelage.

Wage earners are asserting that better factory conditions and safety appliances are being vouchsafed them at the expense of a strong and virile unionism. Betterment obtained through the efforts of social workers, benevolent employers or even

through governmental action is not always looked upon with favor. If betterment means wrecking unionism, opinion among organized workers is adverse to such plans. The chairman of the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations expressed the same idea in the following words: "But until the workers themselves realize their responsibility and utilize to the full their collective power, no action, whether governmental or altruistic, can work any genuine and lasting improvement." ⁶

Mr. A. J. Portenar, a well-known member of the Typographical Union, has "an ineradicable notion that work people are entitled to a voice in the making of wage scales, fixing the length of the work day, and other important incidents affecting employment, and that no amount of kindly welfare work, no benefits of any sort flowing from a benevolent despotism which arrogates to itself entire jurisdiction over such matters, can compensate for the deprivation of this inherent right." ⁷ This doubtless is a clear and fairly accurate portrayal of the attitude of the great majority of union men. Mr. Gompers offers this couplet:

"It is better to resist and lose
Than not to resist at all."

And two of the labor members of the Commission

⁶ *Report*, 1915 ed., p. 301.

⁷ *The Annals of the American Academy*, May, 1917, p. 195.

on Industrial Relations reaffirm these sentiments in unmistakable terms. "Labor must work out its own salvation. Wage workers can attain that degree of well-being to which they are entitled only by their own efforts. The general public cannot be expected to do for them what they fail to do for themselves, nor would it be desirable that those rights and benefits to which they are entitled should be handed down to them by the Government or by organized society as grace from above." ⁸

The potentialities of scientific management are enormous; but the maximum increase in output cannot be attained unless the workers are willing to cooperate with the efficiency engineers, unless the former feel that the system will be of benefit to them, unless they are allowed some voice in connection with its adoption and its administration. Employers have doubtless tried to secure the major fraction of the benefits for themselves; and union leaders have adopted the familiar and naïve policy of fighting the introduction and utilization of scientific management. If scientific management results in increased efficiency, its general adoption like the introduction of machinery in the face of opposition, is quite certain to follow. Organized labor may delay, but not permanently prevent, the adoption of scientific management. The labor leader should be counseled to lay aside the negative and barren policy of obstruction and in its stead plan to har-

⁸ *Report*, p. 288.

vest for labor a generous share of the benefits. The problem from the standpoint of the nation, as well as from that of the expert in efficiency engineering, is to make scientific management and welfare work look good to both employer and employees. Industrial peace and industrial efficiency cannot be anticipated until labor and capital cease to be suspicious of each other.⁹

The old hatred which Jacksonian democracy entertained for the expert in public office is unfortunately being revived in the ranks of organized labor in America. The defeat of the Mitchel administration in the New York City election of 1917 is an indication of popular indifference and antagonism toward the work of the expert. The revival of crude democracy is peculiarly ill-timed. The tasks to be performed by our government are becoming more and more complex as the years go by; and the United States and the other nations have but recently faced the danger of a world famine. Now, above all other times in the history of the world, administrative tasks should be handled by experts. But at the very moment when students of American politics are telling us that the "people as a whole must leave to experts matters requiring expert knowledge,—but hold the expert responsible—labor leaders and others are decrying the work of the well trained. The opposition of the men of labor

⁹ See Carlton, "Labor and Capital after the War," *The Public*, March 23, 1918.

to the "intellectuals" is evidently directed against the idea that the workers must blindly follow the advice and plans of the specialists. It is a new phase of the problem of democracy and of mistakes versus centralized control and efficiency.

The socialists have long taken great delight in holding up to ridicule the middle class reformer, up-lifter or social worker; but the conservative labor leaders whose relations with the socialists are by no means harmonious are also calling this enthusiastic group bad names. The capable editor of one of the best labor journals puts his view as follows: "With the endowment of funds by well-intentioned people there has arisen during recent years a group of professional uplifters, men and women, who for a salary devote their time to studying industrial problems, investigating industrial conditions and preparing programs having as an object the welfare of labor. Most of the professional uplifters have a genuinely sympathetic heart for the welfare of labor, but a number seem to be of the opinion that their attainments and knowledge are so superior to that of the workers, that their mission is to tell the workers what they want, what they need, and what they should do to secure their ends."¹⁰ And Mr. Gompers is still more bitter. "One of the most dangerous phases of present-day affairs is the group of otherwise disengaged philan-

¹⁰ *International Molders' Journal*, April, 1916, p. 335.

thropists who wish to do things *for* the poor, and the developing profession of specially trained salaried individuals who are anxious to establish ways and means by which they may solve the industrial and social problems of the workers. . . . As these expert reformers—"intellectuals"—increase in number and zeal they disclose plainly that their prototype is the ancient village busybody to whom no detail of other men's lives was sacred, and their present purposes are no more exalted than were those of the unskilled busybody who worked without technical training."¹¹ Mr. Gompers also describes the professional and amateur social worker by means of the picturesque phrase of "barnacles" upon the labor movement. A socialist representative of organized labor declares that organized labor "is no more willing to submit to the rule of the beneficent and efficient than were the American colonists willing to submit to the rule of the British Parliament. Labor would rather be free than clean."¹² A few years ago a union official informed the writer that it was impossible for men of the type of the latter to understand the aims and ideals of unionists.

In another respect the ideals of organized labor approach those of the frontier democracy typified by Andrew Jackson. The nonsocialist leaders, and of course the socialists also, of the American Federation of Labor approve of legislation which pro-

¹¹ *American Federationist*, March, 1916.

¹² Marot, *American Labor Unions*, p. 10.

fects those who cannot be organized or which removes obstacles in the way of organized labor. Child labor laws and laws regulating convict labor are favored. The recent act in regard to seamen was actively lobbied for because it was held that this act "removes the last vestige of involuntary servitude from the laws of the United States." The Federation is practically a unit in favoring federal and state laws which place labor organizations outside the category of trusts. Such laws are urged as "liberating" labor. On the other hand, the same organization is officially committed to opposition to laws which are alleged to fetter organized labor, such as laws limiting the hours of labor for adult males employed by private corporations or by individuals, laws providing for compulsory arbitration and for compulsory social insurance. These laws are conceived to be attempts "to rivet the masses of labor to the juggernaut of government." Fear of governmental agencies is expressed. There "has been a constant struggle of the workers through the ages, to get the tentacles of governmental agencies from off the throats of the workers and to break the gyves from off their wrists."¹⁸ And laws of the second type just mentioned will help to undo the good work of preceding generations. Mr. John P. Frey, editor of the *International Molders' Journal*, writes that the "most influential leaders and thinkers in the trade union movement" feel

¹⁸ Gompers, *American Federationist*, May, 1916, p. 347.

that it is their duty "to deny the right of the legislature to endeavor to regulate by law what any of the terms of employment shall be for adult males except those in government employ."¹⁴ However, the "radicals and the westerners" in the American Federation of Labor have felt more favorable toward legislative activity than "the conservatives and the easterners." The attitude of Mr. Gompers and his followers toward the Adamson law of 1916, which appeared to be legislation fixing the length of the normal working day for railway employees, may mean a changed attitude on the part of the conservative leaders of the Federation.¹⁵ Mr. Gompers' anxiety to get the railway brotherhoods into the fold of the Federation may, however, have caused him temporarily to lay aside his opposition to labor legislation of the type represented by the Adamson law. But this law may reasonably be interpreted as forced legislation in regard to wages rather than as to the length of the working day, in a quasi-public industry; and during the entire controversy in the not distant background was the threat of direct union action in case organized labor did not get what it demanded.

This attitude on the part of organized labor is probably due in part at least to a lack of confidence in the unbiased judgment of the legislature, the ju-

¹⁴ Letter dated January 18, 1917.

¹⁵ The 1917 Convention adopted a resolution favoring a federal eight hour day for women and minors "who are employed on products which enter into interstate trade."

diciary and the administrative officials. "No testimony presented to the Commission has left a deeper impression than the evidence that there exists among the workers an almost universal conviction that they, both as individuals and as a class, are denied justice in the enactment, adjudication, and administration of law, that the very instruments of democracy are often used to oppress them and to place obstacles in the way of their movement toward economic, industrial and political freedom and justice."¹⁶ In part, also, this distrust of governmental action is due to the feeling that the best interests of the working people can be advanced only by organization and by collective bargaining. The Supreme Court of the United States has recently affirmed the right of a state to regulate hours of labor for adult males. As a consequence, more stress may be laid by organized labor upon legislative action. Early in 1918 the New York State Federation of Labor adopted resolutions favoring the enactment of an eight hour law and a Saturday half holiday law.¹⁷

The employers and capitalists of the country are becoming resigned to interference, regulation and control through a variety of commissions, committees, surveys and reports. The Interstate Commerce Commission is no longer bitterly opposed by

¹⁶ *Report of Commission on Industrial Relations, 1915*, p. 38. See also p. 307.

¹⁷ Fitch, *The Survey*, February 2, 1918.

the railway interests. It was even suggested before the federal government took control of the railways that the Commission be given power to fix the wages of railway employees. The Federal Trade Commission is the opening wedge in other fields. The operation of the railways by the federal government met with little opposition at the time the step was taken. The assumption during the war of extraordinary powers, by the federal government, over our business enterprises will doubtless leave a mark which will not be entirely erased. While capital was gradually losing its aversion for regulation, arbitration, social insurance and even for governmental ownership of public utilities, organized labor has been becoming more and more suspicious of such proposals. Mr. Gompers as the spokesman of the American Federation of Labor opposed the compulsory health insurance measures fathered by the American Association for Labor Legislation, a very respectable body of experts and students of social problems. It is alleged that these proposals were drawn up without consultation with organized labor; and adverse efforts upon unions now providing benefit funds are feared. "We may prematurely and do unnecessarily lose a number and a large number of our fellows by reason of ill-health, but it is even of greater concern to all the working people of the country that under no guise, however well intentioned, shall they lose their liberties."¹⁸ In

¹⁸ *American Federationist*, April, 1916.

short, more sickness, more suffering and more premature deaths among multitudes of workers and their families coupled with strong trade unionism are preferable to less with weakened unions. It is the martyrdom of many for the cause of organized labor and in the interest of future betterment. The socialists and many trade unionists who are not socialists are, however, in favor of health insurance. The sole representative of the socialist party in Congress, Mr. London, introduced a bill providing for a commission to report a plan for the establishment and maintenance of a national insurance fund. This bill was bitterly opposed by Mr. Gompers.

In the nineties, the American Federation of Labor adopted resolutions favoring municipal ownership of public utilities and government ownership of the railways. Recently organized labor began to oppose municipal ownership of public utilities because of the fear that governmental employees will be restricted in their right to use the weapons—the strike and the boycott—of organized labor. For example, many unionists opposed the ownership by the city of the street railways of Detroit. In answer to an appeal made to him, President Gompers sent the following telegram to labor representatives in Detroit: “I would not vote in favor of municipalization of the railways unless it had at least this provision: right of the workers to organize and for the directors of the railroad to enter into joint bargain regarding wages, hours and conditions of employ-

ment. If proposition does not contain such a proviso, in my judgment, it should be defeated." ¹⁹ In 1915, the American Federation adopted resolutions favoring government ownership of the telegraph lines, providing provisions were made allowing the employees to organize.

Does this attitude of organized labor indicate that it is exalting the means—organization—rather than the end—betterment of living and working conditions? Does it mean that labor leaders are emphasizing unionism in order to add to their power, prestige and following? Labor leaders are, like all other human beings, selfish; and they doubtless do over-emphasize the importance of organization. But it seems clear that the organized workers of the United States were convinced in 1916 and 1917 that the hope of the workingmen as a class was anchored to self-help through collective bargaining and organized effort. Therefore, any proposal or measure which tended to prevent the use of the traditional weapons of organized labor or which restricted the functions of labor organizations in the name of public welfare or of business prosperity was looked upon as subversive of the best interests of the wage workers of the nation. A large percentage of the members of American labor organizations belong to the so-called skilled trades. "Such labor is strong at industrial bargaining; it is weak only at the polls." Hence, it is urged that American la-

¹⁹ *American Federationist*, February, 1916.

bor organizations are wise in opposing governmental interference in industrial disputes.²⁰ But, if the percentage of unskilled in the ranks of organized labor is increasing, a new policy may soon become advisable. However, the American Federation is as yet largely controlled by leaders who represent the old-line unions of skilled workers.

Not only the unionists, but also the farmers, were placing their trust more and more in organized effort and in the pressure of united and aggressive action on the industrial field. Farmers as well as unionists were beginning to assert confidently that victories were to be achieved on the industrial field rather than through the enactment of ameliorative measures secured by legislative action. The farmers did not go as far as organized labor along this route but their faces were turned in that direction. In the "milk war" in New York in the autumn of 1916, the farmers producing milk seized that familiar weapon of organized labor, the strike. Many of the episodes common to a labor disturbance marked the course of events. The "scab," a farmer, was coerced and ostracized by his neighbors, also farmers. "It was a very small number who insisted upon their right to ship their milk in defiance of their neighbors, and life for these promptly became very uncomfortable. . . . It wasn't a happy existence they led for a few days, and most of them capitulated."

²⁰ Commons and Andrews, *Principles of Labor Legislation*, p. 156.

lated and joined the League before the strike was many days old." The few who persisted faced the "scorn of their neighbors" and could not get help "in thrashing and other coöperative neighborhood efforts." "We have found that we possess a little of the fighting spirit of our Puritan ancestors . . . and we have demonstrated that we can fight side by side."²¹ And similar episodes have occurred in the rural districts elsewhere in the United States. The program of the Non-Partisan League in the Northwest and the demand of the New York farmers for fifty real farmers in the State Legislature, indicate, however, a firm belief in the potency of political action.

Returning to the consideration of the attitude of organized labor, it may be pointed out that legislative action in regard to hours, minimum wages and factory conditions will benefit unorganized labor more than it will the members of labor organizations; but organized labor has not habitually manifested much interest in improving the condition of the unskilled and unorganized. From the point of view of the unionist, improvement in working conditions or increases in wages obtained through legal enactment or because of voluntary concessions on the part of the employer, are of less importance than labor solidarity in the face of defeat. In short, let it be repeated, organization, coherence and loyalty to the union are considered by organized labor

²¹ *The Rural New Yorker*, December 2, 1916.

to be of more value to the wage earners as a class than higher wages, a shorter working day or welfare provisions obtained without struggle or sacrifice.

European wage earners manifest less distrust of legislative activity. But in Europe the labor party, partisan to the interests of the wage earners, is a powerful lever which has forced directly or indirectly many legislative enactments favorable to the interests of workingmen. In this country, on the other hand, outside of the Socialist party group, labor has attempted to work through the old parties financed by the business interests. It is, consequently, very difficult for labor in America to show that ameliorative legislation has been forced by the ballot in the hands of the workers; and, further, much legislation in recent decades favored by organized labor has been sidetracked, emasculated or found to be unenforceable.

If legislative action favorable to the interests of labor came about solely as the result of pressure brought to bear by a well organized and closely knit labor party, there would be little or no occasion to fear that legislation in regard to hours, minimum wages and the like would weaken organized labor. Legislative work would be just as definite a form of union activity as are strikes. To obtain demands through legislation would strengthen the solidarity of labor as much as if those demands were obtained as the result of activity on the industrial field. The

weapons and methods of organized labor would doubtless undergo certain significant changes after legislative activity became an important and customary form of union endeavor. The power of the American courts under our written constitution is another factor in the matter. A powerful labor party in the United States might find its efforts in a large measure nullified in a way unknown to European labor parties. On the other hand, a powerful labor party might lead to the appointment of men to the federal Supreme Court who would sanction extraordinary extensions of the police power.

Legislation to-day, in the absence of a strong labor party, always means a compromise with other groups and interests. It is passed as a concession on the part of conservatives to organized labor and to the so-called reformer. In short, the political policy of the American Federation of Labor has been, up to date, far from successful. To-day the laurels for the passage of labor legislation are placed on the brow of the reformer rather than upon that of the labor leader. And members of organized labor, before the war unsettled conditions, were beginning to recognize this fact. In their 1914 convention, the biggest and most powerful union in the American Federation, the United Mine Workers, passed resolutions favoring the formation of a labor party. In 1918 and 1919, several local and

state labor parties were favored or actually organized.

In 1919, steps were also taken leading toward the formation of a national labor party to enter the contest in 1920. President Wilson's labor policy up to the time of the strike of the coal miners in 1919 was quite satisfactory to the leaders of organized labor. The injunctions issued in connection with that big strike and the growing unsympathetic attitude of the general public may bring about a situation favorable to the rapid growth of a national labor party. Labor has become aggressive in recent months; and it is doubtful whether either of the old parties can be expected to look with favor upon any but the more moderate demands of organized labor.

Unless a clear cut labor party—the socialist or some new party—is able to gain the allegiance of many wage earners and become a potent political force, the tendency of the leaders of labor organizations in the face of opposition to emphasize the importance of purely trade union action will doubtless be more and more clearly discerned. But, are the wage earners sufficiently united to make a strong labor party possible in the United States? Would not a large portion of the skilled workers vote with the middle class—the small farmers, small business men and professional men? The path which labor is to tread in the near future depends in no small measure on whether the “aristo-

crats" of industry do or do not join hands with the masses of the unskilled.

While it is true that the trend of machine industry and of scientific management is to undermine the trade or craft of the skilled worker, up to the present time many of the leading union organizations have not been seriously menaced. The building craftsmen, the printers and the members of the railway brotherhoods are among those that have not as yet distinctly felt the pinch. And these craftsmen are powerful in the labor world. The sooner these aristocrats of labor feel the pinch, the sooner may they be expected to join with the unskilled either upon the political or the industrial field. Then a new and momentous crisis in the history of labor organizations will be reached.

Unless favored by certain strategic advantages as in the building trades, unless a fairly high degree of skill is required as in the printing industry or in the case of railway engineers, or unless the strong union can be used to equalize competitive conditions as in the coal mining industry, labor organizations facing strong and hostile employers' associations have in recent years been engaged in an uphill fight. In many important industries the employers are bitterly opposed to effective unionism and have been able to stifle unionism. The iron and steel industry affords an excellent example of enforced nonunionism. The Manly Report to the Commission on Industrial Re-

lations puts the case even more emphatically: "Almost without exception the employees of the large corporations are unorganized, as a result of the active and aggressive 'nonunion' policy of the corporation managements. Furthermore, the labor policy of the large corporations almost inevitably determines the labor policy of the entire industry." Since it has been almost impossible to bring about organization within such industries, the hope of betterment through the pressure of the workers can be realized only by means of political action—unless the war works a radical modification. The ballot is secret; but union membership cannot be successfully concealed from the spies of employers.

Under some present-day conditions, however, the safeguards of the ballot and of political democracy are of minor importance. Political strength and economic power as a rule go hand in hand. In the Report on the Colorado Strike made for the Commission on Industrial Relations is found the following significant statement: "Nothing has come home with greater force in the course of the investigations of the Commission than the realization that men and women who are economically subservient cannot be politically free, that the forms of democracy and the guarantees of American institutions are hollow and meaningless in communities where the many must depend on the favor of the few for the opportunity to obtain food, clothing and shelter." The import of this observation

is by no means limited to Colorado or to the coal mining industry as Homestead, Los Angeles, Lawrence and other cities and localities bear eloquent testimony.

Another and more subtle cause for the political impotency of the wage earners as a group may be found in the evolution of routine and of the machine process in the great industries of the present. The machine process does not demand a high degree of intelligence from the average worker. The shop organization in highly systematized and scientifically managed factories is of the military type. A few directors—the manager, foremen, expert advisers—do the planning. The rôle of the typical wage earner is to carry out the orders given them without question and without deviation. The average shop, mill or factory has little use among the mass of its workers for the man of initiative. It does not need or desire men to carry a message to Garcia. But unquestioning obedience, subdivision of labor and monotony in the sphere of bread-winning unfortunately do not furnish the requisites for good citizenship. Men spending a large portion of their waking hours in this manner are easily led by designing politicians. Unaccustomed to thinking, they follow the leader. "Dumb, driven cattle" is a term which has not inaptly been applied to them.

Nevertheless, year after year, the percentage of routine workers is increasing. It has been esti-

mated that in the railway business there is one general officer to every three hundred employees. "In glass-making, steel-making and mining the range of intelligence on the part of the workman is lessened through the installation of perfected mechanism and devices. While there is a very sharp demand for super-intelligence for the few there is as certainly a demand for a mechanized intelligence for the many, a demand which throws a light upon the opposition to the literacy test for immigrants and explains the toleration of a low level of culture among workers in Packingtown, Lawrence, the mining districts of Colorado and similar industrial centers everywhere." ²² And Scott Nearing declares that "the most shocking thing about the distribution of occupations in modern industry is the overwhelming proportion of clerks and wage earners." The introduction of systems of scientific management will also hasten the elimination of the craftsman, and will tend to erase the lines of demarcation between different crafts. "Scientific management," writes one student of the system, "tends to shift the demand from labor which is already skilled to that which is teachable." It demands the adaptable and tractable worker. If this be the condition under which a living for the many is obtained, the importance of making leisure hours count for mental uplift and developmental activities is not small. Since, in the immediate future,

²² Weeks, *The Survey*, January 8, 1916, p. 422.

routine in industry seems inevitable, comfortable and attractive homes and home environment, education and recreation should furnish the material to check the deterioration and demoralization of the workers under the pressure of routine industry. If these fail, the future progress of the wage-earning class will indeed be slow; and the outlook for planned, purposeful and reasonable action whether in the political or the industrial field, on the part of the great group of wage earners is not bright.

Approximately one-fifth of our population is foreign-born; and in the industrial cities and section of the nation the percentage is much higher. A large number of the foreign-born have not been naturalized and cannot vote. The situation in the steel and iron town of East Youngstown, Ohio, is more or less typical of our many "satellite cities." At the time of a serious labor disturbance in 1916, East Youngstown had a population of about 10,000, "of whom only 450 were qualified voters."²⁸ As the percentage of the foreign-born among the wage earners of the country is larger than among other classes, the political strength of the workers, organized and unorganized, is reduced because of the large fraction of nonvoters in their ranks. The great reduction in the flow of immigration since the war began in 1914 makes this point less pertinent to-day than in the period immediately preceding 1914. Many workers are of the type known

²⁸ Fitch, *The Survey*, January 22, 1916.

as migratory workers. This class is probably on the increase. The frequent change of work-place often forces the migratory worker to lose his vote. Promotion and political positions have doubtless drawn many a labor leader from the union fold; but in the future the efficiency of this method of clamping down the lid on labor agitation may be questioned.²⁴ The opportunities offered the average American workingman to become a small proprietor are surely insufficient to act longer as an efficient check upon the growth of class consciousness and of political solidarity among the wage workers of the nation.

The difficulties confronting labor on the industrial field before April, 1917, were great; but at that time organized labor in the United States seemed definitely committed to struggle on that field, using the strike, the boycott, etc. On the political field, the policy fostered by the American Federation of Labor has not been notably successful in gaining the ends desired by organized labor; the establishment of a labor party seems to offer greater possibilities for the labor group. It also seems reasonable to expect that the militant activities of labor organizations will be stressed under the normal conditions of peace until a strong and stable labor party is organized. Nevertheless, in the recent months of national stress the federal

²⁴ See Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, pp. 92-93.

administration has recognized organized labor as never before in American history. "In every department of government," writes Professor Commons, "that employs labor or fixes the price that manufacturers shall charge, there is a leading official of the American Federation of Labor on the committee who has as much power as the representative of the capitalists." This may not without reason be counted as a vindication of the political policy of Mr. Gompers and the American Federation.

Since the United States entered into the struggle against Germany, American labor leaders have insistently demanded a voice in directing the policies of the nation. But this voice apparently means little more to them than that "union leaders shall sit on boards and committees, the embodiment and visible sign of labor's power and dignity." For example, President Gompers, supported by the Executive Committee of the American Federation of Labor, insisted that "wage earners ought to be represented upon every commission and committee connected with national and state Councils of Defense." English labor²⁵ seems to cherish a higher ideal as to the part which labor should play in determining war policies, peace programs and reconstruction plans. In short, the ideals and policies

²⁵ Organized labor in the United States will doubtless be profoundly influenced by the reconstruction program of English labor.

of American labor leaders are shortsighted and narrow visioned; these are the inevitable products of business unionism. These men see always dangling before their eyes the petty and immediate results to be gained by aggressive unionism of the striking and bargaining type. Immediate results in the form of higher wages, and place and prestige for labor leaders obscure the demand of the common man—the great inarticulate mass of workers—for fundamental economic changes which more farsighted students of social progress and which alert business men see coming over the horizon.²⁸

The American Federation of Labor is the embodiment of business unionism; and Samuel Gompers, whose dominating principles in regard to unionism were crystallized in the eighties and nineties of last century, is the controlling force in the Federation. Why has business unionism become the prevailing type of labor organization in the United States? Why is a man of Mr. Gompers' type able to exercise such dominating control? One of the important reasons for the characteristics of the typical labor leader in the United States undoubtedly grows out of the great diversity found in the ranks of American labor. No labor leader in any other country is confronted by "a working class so divided by race, language and the prejudices incidental to these divisions"; and in no other

²⁸ See, for example, Gompers, *American Federationist*, April, 1918, pp. 303-305.

country are the basic industries so thoroughly integrated and under the control of such powerful corporations. Success as a labor leader means ability to obtain for labor those things which all of the discordant labor group desire; and the only common denominator is found in higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions, jobs for union men, and similar tangible and immediate results. The backward position of American labor before the war began, on the political field, and its unfortunate narrowness of social vision may be in a large measure ascribed to conditions which have been peculiar to the United States.

The present trend in American labor organizations is a matter of great social import to the men and women of the United States. The policies and practices of organized labor obviously affect everybody within our national boundaries. The World War has disclosed to us the vital necessity of efficient and sufficient production of the great primal necessities of life—food, clothing, coal, building materials, etc. Organized labor may hinder or promote production as well as affect the distribution of wealth. Indeed, as the late Professor Hoxie declared, "unionism has its finger in practically every social pie that is baking."²⁷

While the rights of organized labor should be given due recognition, neither unions nor associations of employers can be allowed to run amuck.

²⁷ *Trade Unionism in the United States*, c. 1.

In the critical time of war, or during the ticklish period of reconstruction following the War, the nation cannot countenance policies on the part of labor or of capital which unnecessarily obstruct industrial programs or reduce the national dividend. The nation cannot afford to allow employers or employed to exercise "the right to commit unlimited sabotage." The War has made it very clear that no nation, no craft or business group, as well as no individual, lives unto itself. The War taught this and other nations that in a time of national crisis individual and group gain must be subordinated to the larger concept of social welfare,—and this lesson ought not to be forgotten after the treaty of peace is signed.

Recent experiences with the transportation system and with the distribution of coal and of sugar in this country, and the experiences of other nations in rationing, make clear to all who are willing to face facts the necessity for expert control in the interests of community well-being. These experiences prove to the satisfaction of many that there is a "social point of view."²⁸ But to visualize clearly from the social point of view is difficult until class lines and interest demarcations are blurred and made somewhat indistinct by a great emer-

²⁸ This social point of view is the unstable product of present and past interest groupings and institutions. It is a resultant in the field of social mechanics. See Chapter I; also Carlton, *History and Problems of Organized Labor*, c. 1.

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gency. Now is, and for some years in the future there will be, a time of stress and strain. Now is the time to emphasize common interests and social welfare; now is the time to curb excessive demands on the part of any group or interest.

CHAPTER XI

THE WAR AND AFTER

The entrance of the United States into the Great World Struggle quickly and clearly disclosed the existence of certain inefficient methods in American industry,—inefficient methods which in the times of peace had been seen indistinctly or disregarded with characteristic American optimism. Lack of harmonious effort within the nation soon became painfully apparent to all. Labor and capital, farmers and middlemen, manufacturers and consumers, did not exhibit in any marked degree harmonious and united action. Suddenly the imminent danger of a food scarcity loomed ahead. Restriction of output whether by wage workers or by employers could be seen by the average individual to menace the nation and the successful issue of the war; many businesses were held to be non-essential. Face to face with a world crisis of unprecedented dimensions, it could be discerned clearly that the prime industrial need was an uninterrupted and plentiful flow of materials essential to the conduct of the war and to the efficiency of the

civilian working population. *Laissez faire-ism* was quickly and unceremoniously relegated to the scrap heap; industrial mobilization became the order of the day. The great third party—the public—acting through its agency, the federal government, found it necessary, as never before in this country, to intervene in industry and to direct business affairs for the purpose of reducing friction and lost motion in the business world. Both labor and capital, under the pressure of national necessity, accepted in the main with a commendable lack of reluctance, governmental mandates in regard to industrial policies.

Organized labor has been a consistent foe of war and militarism. But in the Great Struggle against German autocracy and aggression, the mass of American workers, organized and unorganized, clearly saw that the hopes of the wage earners were centered on the forces struggling to make "the world safe for democracy." Organized labor in the United States, with the exception of certain elements in the Industrial Workers of the World, loyally supported the war policies of the government. On March 12, 1917, anticipating our entrance into the war, a very significant declaration was unanimously adopted by representatives of the American Federation of Labor and of five unaffiliated national unions. It reads in part as follows:

"We, the officers of the National and Interna-

tional Trade Unions of America, in national conference assembled in the capital of our nation, hereby pledge ourselves in peace and in war, in stress and in storm, to stand unreservedly by the standards of liberty and the safety and preservation of the institutions and ideals of our Republic. In this solemn hour of our nation's life, it is our earnest hope that our Republic may be safeguarded in its unswerving desire for peace; that our people may be spared the horrors and the burdens of war; that they may have the opportunity to cultivate and develop the arts of peace, human brotherhood and a higher civilization. But if, despite all our endeavors and hopes, our country should be drawn into the maelstrom of the European conflict, we, with these ideals of liberty and justice herein declared as the indispensable basis for national policies, offer our services to our country in every field of activity to defend, safeguard, and preserve the Republic of the United States of America against its enemies whomsoever they may be, and we call upon our fellow workers and fellow citizens in the holy name of Labor, Justice, Freedom and Humanity, to devotedly and patriotically give like service." President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor, other labor leaders and the great rank and file of organized labor have, with few exceptions, faithfully lived up to this patriotic declaration.

Strikes were not entirely eliminated during the War; and some workers were made to feel the

weight of public and official sentiment. But the employers of the nation were also not entirely free from insubordination. After the first year of the War, however, the decisions of the National War Labor Board were quite generally accepted without serious dissent. This Board was doubtless quite successful because both labor and capital were represented in its membership, and because American labor was (1918) convinced that President Wilson aimed to give the workingman a square deal.

Since August, 1914, organized labor in the United States has been offered unusual opportunities to strengthen its position; and labor leaders have not been slow to take advantage of such opportunities. Immigration, mixing nationalities and classes, has been a potent factor in checking the growth of class consciousness; and it has furnished a large supply of labor. But for over five years immigration has been reduced to a very thin stream. For months in succession employers have complained of a scarcity of labor, and wages have risen as a consequence. The rapidly rising cost of living has also acted as a spur to aggressiveness on the part of organized labor. After the United States became an active participant in the War, the Federal Government recognized organized labor as never before in its history. Among the important guiding principles in the war labor policy of the government were the following: The recognition of the right of the workers to organize and to bar-

gain collectively; the recognition of the basic eight hour day; and the right of the workers to a living wage. And these policies have been applied to such strongholds of anti-unionism as the Chicago stockyards and the Bethlehem steel plant. In turn, restriction of output on the part of the wage workers was reduced during the War. The statistics of coal production and of rivet driving were illuminating and encouraging. But this result could not have been accomplished under the old form of undemocratic control of industry by and in the interests of a private corporation.

American industries weathered the stress and strain of the war period. Large profits have been received and unprecedentedly large sums have been paid in the form of taxes. The nation has spent enormous amounts for war purposes. Surely clear-sighted and hard-headed labor leaders will argue that high wages may be paid in a time of peace or at least that reductions in wages will be an unnecessary part of the program of readjustment to peaceful conditions. In short, American labor has caught a new and splendid vision of future opportunities, and it has made some very tangible advances over 1914. The subordinate position in the industrial world occupied by labor in the pre-war decades will not again be accepted gracefully or without a bitter struggle. Whether for good or for evil need not be here discussed; in the judg-

ment of the writer, this is the situation which confronts the American people.

American workingmen are at present somewhat opposed to government ownership; they fear bureaucratic control. The public official has too often emulated the private employer in insisting upon low wages and the like. Many public officials have had the point of view and the outlook of the conservative and union-smashing private employer. Again, government ownership would spell standardization; and the maintenance of the *status quo* is feared by wage earners anxious to raise their economic and social level. Now is an excellent time for employers who wish to reduce the economic function of government after peace is declared, to gain the good-will and support of employees by the sort of scientific management which recognizes employees as men rather than as hands. In recent months, however, the leaders of organized labor are beginning to discern the magnitude of the power now resting in the hands of the government; and active participation in government instead of opposition to it may loom up as the most feasible program for American labor. Labor leaders are considering plans for participating in governmental activities. Progress in this direction will result in a change from antagonism to tolerance of government ownership. The recent appointments by the administration of union leaders to responsible administrative positions has given the wage workers

a vision of a government sympathetic to the hopes and aspirations of organized and unorganized labor. Under such a government, public ownership would no longer be feared by organized labor.

The labor policy of President Wilson's administration during the War promised to mark a new epoch in the history of organized labor in America. The administration virtually recognized the right of organized labor to participate in the political and industrial affairs of the nation. There was reason to expect that organized labor would adjust its aims, methods and structure to conform to a new, strange and encouraging situation. But, unfortunately, since the armistice both organized labor and organized capital have been anxious for a trial of strength. The long series of strikes in 1919 culminating in the steel and coal strikes are a direct consequence of this attitude so unexpected in a nation which has been fighting to make the "world safe for democracy." And the coal strike has led to a definite break between organized labor and the administration at Washington. The attitude of the administration is doubtless expressed in the President's Message (December, 1919). "The right of individuals to strike is inviolable and ought not to be interfered with by any process of government, but there is a predominant right, and that is the right of the government to protect all of its people and to assert its power and majesty against the challenge of any class."

It is to be feared that a situation is being created

which will discredit the conservative labor leaders and offer a fine opportunity for the agitator and the emotional orator. Unless some method can be found to accomplish the difficult task of bringing "a genuine democratization of industry based upon the full recognition of the right of those who work in whatever rank to participate in some organic way in every decision which directly affects their welfare," we in America are indeed face to face with a period of bitter industrial struggle and of marked industrial inefficiency. Now is certainly a time in which the far-sighted employers who are trying out new methods of industrial control and the more conservative and able labor leaders should be brought together along with a group of leading industrial engineers and economists, in a conference for the consideration of the present situation. But the stiff-necked employers of labor who refuse to confer with representatives of organized labor have no solution to offer an anxious nation. They are hopelessly out of touch with the present. The same may also be said to those naïve individuals who put their trust only in machine guns and the military power. Urgent is the need of a cool, calm and intelligent consideration of the present grave industrial situation. We need more and better machinery for the definite reorganization of industrial control; but more is needed. The preliminary statement of the President's Industrial Conference puts this matter concisely: "Human fellowship in industry may be either

an empty phrase or a living fact. There is no magic formula. It can be a fact only if there is continuous and sincere effort for mutual understanding and an unfailing recognition that there is a community of interest between employer and employee." The dawning of a new era may be marked by the use of the shop committee, the Whitley councils, the International Harvester company's councils, the Hart, Schaffner and Marx plan, the plans of several Cleveland firms, the Filene store plan, the U. S. Arsenal plan, and the much-attacked Plumb plan.

The after-war problems may for the present purpose be studied: (1) From the point of view of national efficiency in production, and (2) from that of world peace and international comity among nations under a democratic form of government. The War has forced upon England, France, Germany and other warring European countries a well-defined national outlook. The individual and his personal business plans have been subordinated to social or national aims and control as never before in the history of modern nations and of modern business. America entered the War late; and the full force of war readjustments was not upon us before the latter months of 1918. Furthermore, American business men and Americans generally have been extremely impatient of governmental or social control and interference. Business anarchy, wastefulness and rule-of-thumb methods have prevailed to an alarming degree. But in the fierce after-war

competition for markets which is certain to follow the treaty of peace, American business men are to face as competitors nationally regulated and directed business organizations. They are to confront the competition of war-chastened and war-welded nations whose business efficiency is a by-product of war necessity. Another big peace problem will be the replacement of the enormous amount of wealth which has been destroyed in this gigantic struggle. The urgent need of replacing the wastes and of again putting behind us the specter of famine and of fuel scarcity will lead to a more insistent demand than ever before made in times of peace for the highest pitch of efficiency in all kinds of industrial activity.

After the War is ended, therefore, one of the prime necessities will be the continued efficiency of our industrial organization. The relation of labor to capital will be a matter of paramount importance to national security and national progress. The nation cannot afford in the post-bellum era to allow quarrels between employers and employees to reduce productivity. The common weal will require the employer, the investor and the landowner to forego unusual profits and income; and the worker should do "his bit." The efficient mobilization of labor and capital requires industrial peace; and industrial peace can come only through mutual concessions under the direction of public authority. A big after-the-war problem will be:

How may industrial peace be assured in the years directly succeeding the signing of the treaty of peace?

The vices of American individualistic and "profit-eering" economy which have been so clearly disclosed since the United States entered the Great Struggle find their most extreme and discouraging expression in the treatment of the wage workers of the nation, in the extreme subordination of labor to capital. And in the past, history clearly points out, wars and their aftermaths have often lined the pocketbooks of certain prominent groups of citizens; but the workers have ever borne extra burdens. With the facts of history before us, it follows that industrial peace or industrial warfare in the period immediately following the treaty of peace depends in no small measure upon the willingness or unwillingness of employers to accept the new status of the labor group. If employers continue to refuse to "recognize" labor organizations, if they insist upon dictating the terms of employment without consultation with representatives of their employees, and if they insist upon "Prussianism" in industry, the struggle will be on in unprecedented fury. Industrial peace cannot be expected so long as "there is no strong sense of partnership between capital and labor"; it cannot be anticipated until labor and capital cease to be suspicious of each other.

Far-sighted American employers are studying

the situation carefully; but unfortunately many employers are not far-sighted. The situation is full of menace. In the interests of national security and of national betterment, it should be pointed out, in spite of criticism for so doing, that those who propose again to assert with firmness the old traditional rights of the employer, or who wish by force to sit on the lid, are playing with dynamite. If, with the return of peace, a definite and united attempt to put organized labor "in its place" is made by certain great associations of employers, if this large and powerful group dominates the situation after the treaty of peace is signed, and if the federal government be in sympathy with this group, prepare for a social upheaval of unprecedented magnitude. On the other hand, if the government is in sympathy with the aspirations of the labor group, an era of democratization in industry may reasonably be anticipated. Industrial peace and industrial efficiency under private ownership can only be expected, if the reasoning herein presented is valid, in case labor and capital bury the hatchet and earnestly try to understand each other.

Every enlargement of personal freedom has been vigorously opposed by those in power. It was repeatedly urged that the abolition of slavery would strike a hard blow at the foundations of human society and at the fundamentals of civilization. Similar statements were made in regard to the downfall of serfdom, the abolition of imprison-

ment for debt, and the elimination of peonage. But in every case enlargement of the rights of the "unblessed"—the under-dogs—has resulted in betterment. The same opposition is now being manifested toward any step which means the admission of the worker into the councils of industry. And, judging from past history, we may well believe that the results will not be so calamitous as the opponents of such a step assert.

The background of experience for the average factory worker, and particularly for the typical migratory worker, is such as to lead him to undervalue many of the ideals which the middle class man of this country esteems highly. Absence of business experience, elimination of responsibility for the success of the industry, the lack or the emasculation of family life, and a growing suspicion of persons in other walks of life, all contribute to give the working man a point of view which is making more and more wage earners menaces to the present industrial and social order. On the other hand, scientific management and welfare work are too often the results purely and solely of the employer's activity and desires. His attitude and the point of view of his welfare workers are by no means the same as those of the employees. In fact, the personal equations and social reactions of the two groups are very different.

Too many welfare workers have the traditional middle class point of view. They feel that their

ideas are far superior to those of the workers; they wish to direct or "mother" the employees. Unfortunately, to many the worker is still a "hand" instead of a human being with the likes and dislikes, the ambitions and the prejudices, the desire for self-expression and personal choice, which are attributed to the business and professional man of the middle class. Naturally, this attitude is especially galling and distasteful to a group which is rising out of ages of subjection and subordination into a position of greater power and influence. The worker asks for respect as well as for higher wages and a shorter working day. The welfare worker or the scientific management expert who never loses consciousness of his social and intellectual superiority to the wage worker is certain to arouse antagonism and to prove a failure sooner or later.

"Human engineering" is a form of activity which needs to be introduced into every work-place. Decent and humane treatment of workers in shop, mine and store will make for multiplied productivity and for industrial peace. The old-fashioned slave-driving type of employer is out of date; and not only out of date, but he is inefficient as a business manager. Considered from a business point of view, a man, a worker, is much more complex than a machine. Not only is the worker more complex on the physical side, but he possesses an intricate psychical mechanism which is lacking in the case of a machine. He requires more careful and

intelligent care and treatment than do machines. But much less attention has been paid to this more complex form of scientific management than to such simpler matters as the routing of materials or cutting speeds. We do not know, for example, how far standardization and monotony of work may be carried without having the gain overbalanced by loss of efficiency.

The "human engineer's" function should be to restore as far as possible the personal element to industry, to make it possible for employers to gain an inkling of the problems and the aspirations of their employees; and for employees to come into touch with some of the problems which the business man must solve. Perhaps the best example of human engineering in the United States is found in William Filene's Sons Company's store, located in Boston. The recent steps taken by the group of employers constituting the Western Pine Association in dealing with the acute labor situation in the lumber industry of the Northwest, is indicative of real industrial statesmanship. This industry now gives promise of contributing to the scientific study of the human side of production. In striking and unfavorable contrast stands the arbitrary, foolish and illegal action of the copper interests at Bisbee, Arizona. The deportations from Bisbee were a source of widespread irritation and unrest among the rank and file of American wage workers, at a time of extraordinary stress, at a time when it was

especially desirable that amicable relations between labor and capital be maintained. It will be many months before the unrest and suspicions engendered by this act of industrial "Prussianism" are dissipated. Scientific human engineering rests upon the foundation of psychology and social psychology. It reckons with human nature as it is, not as the social worker or the moralist holds it should be; it investigates the under-the-surface causes of industrial unrest and industrial warfare. To make industry "safe for democracy" is one of the chief functions of human engineering.

The economics of the post war period will revolve around the problems of scientifically directing human effort into channels which make for national and for international or world efficiency. The avoidance of world scarcity and the return to a condition of relative plenty depend upon an extraordinary socialization of effort. In the United States, unionists, farmers, manufacturers, transportation agencies, merchants and professional groups may expect to experience more of social and governmental compulsion than in the past. Students of social problems should place more stress upon the necessity of community and national organization in order to bring about advances in efficiency in producing and marketing. The group whether it be composed of workingmen, capitalists or others which obstinately stands in the way of social efficiency, should in the interest of community well-

being made to feel the weight of the disapproval of the general public.

Labor's familiar inclination toward restriction of output and the enterpriser's interest in the value rather than in the quantity and quality of the output of his establishment are especially exasperating in times of national danger. Slackers there are in all social groups. The case of the slacker in the middle and well-to-do classes having a rich "background of social satisfactions" is certainly more difficult to understand and to condone than that of one in the wage-earning group.

Army officers direct groups of men for the purposes of war without significant appeal to the money motive. Soldiers receive a standardized wage or payment—the same within each grade from the lowest private to the highest officer, the same whether on the field of action, in the barracks or in the hospital, the same whether the soldier be more or less efficient. Nevertheless, the typical American soldier is alert, energetic and efficient. But, it must not be forgotten, the labor of the soldier is not "exploited" for private gain. It is not utilized by a profit-making organization. American soldiers have willingly left home and family, and have crossed the Atlantic to fight on the soil of France without the goad of gain. Under stress of national danger, the familiar economic urge is submerged under a flood of motives which are both primitive and deep-seated. A big problem which

the people of the United States and of other nations ought now—to-day—to tackle is the utilization of these motives in peaceful times. Is it not possible—yes, feasible—to lead our captains of industry to efficiency by the lure of other incentives than that of the “almighty dollar”? Are higher wages, premium plans and cash bonuses the only potent instrumentalities to prod workingmen to do their best? Can scientific management learn no lessons from the battlefields of Europe? Are the business men, the professional men and the wage earners all men of single-track motives? Can the effective incentives in times of peace always be boiled down to one? The famous “moral equivalent” of war is a challenge to a study of incentives. In peace, from a study of war time incentives, can we find an effective incentive or a variety of incentives which will drive or induce a man to do his best whether he be a manual or a mental worker, an organizer of an industry or an unskilled worker in the ranks?

The only sort of remedial action or disciplinary measure for which there is any reasonable ground to anticipate success is that which is based upon the results of scientific and painstaking study of group ideals and policies. And it must not be forgotten that such a study is beset by an unusual number of obstacles in the form of prejudices, class bias, preconceptions, personal interests, traditions, customs and presumptions in favor of that which is familiar or established or in favor of that which is new and

unorthodox. But the need for the social engineer is even greater than the difficulties in his path.

Labor organizations are here, and here to stay; but unfortunately some business and professional men cannot read the signs of the times. Like the king of olden times they are futilely trying to keep back the tide. If organized labor is a fairly permanent industrial institution, the labor problem is not one of smashing unions but of working with them. Peaceful collective bargaining with responsible unions, as in the coal mining¹ and the stove molding industry, offers an encouraging tentative solution for certain of the serious labor problems of the after-war period. A labor organization evolved under adverse conditions and in an environment of bitter antagonism will of necessity be militant, aggressive and difficult to deal with; but mellowed by experience with kinder treatment and definite recognition, the characteristics of unionism will be greatly modified. But whether employers do or do not agree with the conclusions reached, labor in the United States is now too strong industrially and politically to accept without a long and bitter struggle the time-worn policy of repression and exclusion from the councils of industry.

While loyally supporting the war program of the administration, organized labor has been looking anxiously forward to the difficult time of reconstruction after the treaty of peace is signed.

¹ Up to November 1, 1919.

Labor wishes to preserve, consolidate and enlarge the gains made during the months of war. To the leaders of conservative organized labor democracy means industrial as well as political democracy. It means that labor shall have a voice in determining the conditions under which the wage worker earns his living. If, during a war, collective bargaining and shop committees of workers are desirable or appropriate, organized labor holds that the presumption is favorable to the use of these methods after the war is over. To insure holding the ground gained, strong labor organizations are considered essential by American labor leaders. "Trade-unionism aims to secure for the wage earners the same rights and liberties in industry which political institutions accomplish for them as citizens. . . . Through its industrial organizations, the trade unions, it [labor] has the only method of action which has proved successful when applied." ²

With some exceptions, the American labor organization is narrow gauge and militant; its aims, ideals and structure show distinctly the handiwork of opposition placed against the drab background of social and industrial inferiority. Help or advice in regard to union action from outside the wage-earning group is considered to be inimical if it tends to lessen the dependency of the worker upon his union and upon the leaders of organized labor. It is clear

² Editorial, *International Molder's Journal*, October, 1918.

that this is, and has been for some years, the attitude of union men in America; and as long as large and powerful groups of employers actively oppose labor organizations, it requires an unusual degree of optimism to anticipate any perceptible modifications.

What part, then, is labor likely to play in the crucial period following the end of the Great Combat? The United States and all the other warring nations have been transformed by the War in a revolutionary manner, economically, politically and financially. No nation is going back to a pre-war basis; the clock of industrial progress cannot be turned back for a new start. After-war reconstruction problems involve the answer to the question of whether the pendulum shall swing back or still further forward. And, if back, how far? If further along the present arc, how much further? The coal regulations, the sugar restrictions, the wheatless and meatless days, the regulation of prices, the selective draft and work or fight orders, all are efficient aids in giving the wage workers the idea that they are vitally interested in economic and political affairs.

Labor is numerically an important faction of the citizenship of the nation; its attitude toward reconstruction programs is a vital matter not only to the United States but to the entire world. Will American labor quite generally adopt and vigorously support a broad program of reconstruction which will place it in the ranks alongside British labor and the

liberals of the United States and of the allied countries, or will it continue to concern itself almost solely with the immediate and narrow gauge policy of wages and hours, of collective bargaining and shop committees? Will American labor continue to look with suspicion upon the activities of social workers and of the liberals outside the ranks of the manual workers, or will it see its way clear to join hands with these elements in the political field? Upon the answer which the next few months bring much depends. The industrial struggles precipitated in the steel and coal industries in the autumn of 1919 will probably aid in pushing radical labor leaders to the front. The situation will tend to make difficult any union between labor and the liberals.

But unless labor and the liberals—intellectuals—work together harmoniously on the political field, the conservatives are quite certain to win in the reconstruction period. Such a victory would mean that again the nation shall think in national rather than in world terms, in terms of profits and values instead of supplies and service, in terms of national jealousy and rivalry rather than of alliances, coöperation and mutual aid; it would mean that the world will not be safe for democracy. The hope of a league of nations and of permanent world peace depends in no small measure upon the union of labor and the liberals upon a program which will reduce the causes of international friction, and make

for political and industrial democracy and for the abolition of special privilege.

The American nation was definitely committed during the War to world peace and democracy; its face was sternly set against autocracy, military rivalry and secret diplomacy. These ideals are all approved and cherished by the wage workers and the liberals of all groups. In the words of another, "after the procuring of bread the preservation of peace has come more and more to the worker to seem his primary interest." But, if after the sword is laid aside American labor is forced to make a bitter fight to retain the advances gained during the war period, toward collective bargaining and industrial democracy, it may be expected, as has been indicated, to stress militant activities and to continue the short-visioned "business" policies which were so ardently and ably advocated by the leaders of the American Federation of Labor in the years immediately preceding 1917. If labor is again obliged to devote its strength in fighting strong and aggressive associations of anti-union employers, it can of necessity pay little attention to the bigger, but more impersonal, problems of world peace and democracy. "The procuring of bread" will have first place; and rightly or wrongly the recognition of unionism is considered to be essential to securing bread or at least to securing bread "with jam" upon it. If, however, the general recognition accorded by the American government of the right of col-

lective bargaining is continued after the governmental pressure is removed, the militant activities of labor organizations will become less prominent and more emphasis upon political and broad-gauge policies may be anticipated.

If this interpretation of the after-war situation is fairly accurate, matters of vital import, not only to American industries and prosperity but also to world politics, hinge (1) upon the willingness on the part of the leaders in large industries, who have hitherto been anti-union, to accept in the after-war era the new status of unionism which the War has brought into being, or (2) upon the continuation of the policy of governmental interference which will accomplish practically the same result. But before a year had passed after the fighting ceased, the great steel industry was struggling against the recognition of unions, and the government had taken "the harness off" industry. However, after the coal strike began the government, in a bungling manner, attempted to replace a portion of the harness upon the coal industry. In December, 1919, the outlook for industrial peace was far from bright. Industrial chaos seemed to lie just ahead.

The American people of all types and interests will do well to keep in mind, in the trying days of political and economic reconstruction which lie just ahead, the practical test which President Wilson has so forcefully recommended in regard to the acceptability of every proposed program. "Is it

just? Is it for the benefit of the average man, without influence or privilege? Does it embody in real fact the highest conception of social justice and of right dealing without respect of person or class or particular interest?" The United States entered into the War and fought under the dominance of lofty ideals of world betterment. One great problem, one which involves active and sacrificial effort, is to carry these fine ideals triumphantly into the period of peace and of reconstruction upon the threshold of which the world is standing. Democracy to-day is not a mere individualistic and negative concept; it demands united and purposeful action; it requires the best efforts of all to make it a potent force for world brotherhood and international amity. Democracy has won a military victory over the foe without; the next test is that of winning a victory in the days of peace over the foe within the nation.

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